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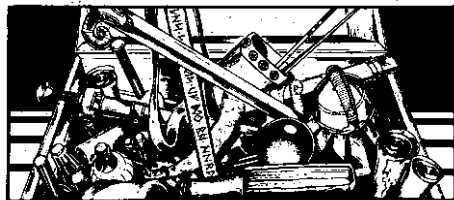
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COVER

Our latest-offering from Dean Morrissey depicts the artist's interpretation of fantastic naval technology — a ship that looks like it could fly even better than it floats.

It looks good, and it's good for you

Every issue of DRAGON® Magazine is new, but this one is newer than most. We came up with a different design for our contents page — one that we like for a lot of reasons. Even if you find the new look a little tough to get used to, we hope you'll appreciate the ways in which it makes the magazine better.

We enlarged and expanded the format for the table of contents to make it easier for you to see at a glance what's inside and where it's at. We moved the list of staff people and contributors lower on the page, on the theory that the people who make the magazine aren't as

(Turn to page 66)

Letters

Further beyond

To the editor:

Katharine Kerr's "Beyond the Dungeon" (Part 2) in issue #88 is one of the most intelligent and clearly written pieces I've ever seen in your pages. Ms. Kerr's work is a wealth of ideas and speculation to even a veteran DM. In the spirit of her article, I want to pass on a few thoughts based on my experience. There are two points I will address: using the six ability scores to roll success in a variety of situations, and the reaction of city dwellers to player characters.

In an example, Ms. Kerr suggests judging a PC's ability to leap across a five-foot-wide pit by multiplying the character's dexterity of 15 by a factor of 5. The result (75% in this case) represents the chance of success. My complaint is that this approach is too generous to low ability scores and too stringent on high ones.

The six basic characteristics are rolled on 3d6, so each point represents a different amount rather than a constant 5%, as Ms. Kerr suggests. It is, for example, 7% easier to roll a 7 or less than it is for a 6 or less, and 9% easier for an 8 than a 7. Someone with a 3 dexterity should have a 0.5% chance of accomplishing a dexterity-based feat, not a 15% chance. A 15 dexterity should give a 95% chance: the odds of rolling 15 or less on 3d6. Allowing only a 75% chance devalues a score of 15.

Aside from being more realistic, this approach does not require figuring the odds as a percentage. The DM simply hands the player 3d6, with instructions to roll the character's dexterity (or strength, intelligence, etc.) or under.

Note that you can also avoid calculating percentages with Ms. Kerr's method. Simply check the ability score by rolling a d20. The effect is the same as multiplying by 5 and rolling percentile dice.

On to the second point. The material on city adventures is superb, but I disagree in one area. Assuming that the overwhelming percentage of city folks are zero-level, they will be fearfully respectful of adventurers. In light of the attack-rate note on p. 25 of the *Players Handbook*, a 5th-level fighter can conceivably slay 5 members of a lynch mob per round. A 5th-level magic-user is somewhat more effective in the same situation. City residents know this is the state of affairs and will behave accordingly.

Jonathan Heiles
Pleasant Valley, N.Y.

The mathematical logic of Jonathan's argument cannot be refuted; however, there's a reason why his approach might not be appropriate for this purpose.

What we're talking about here is using ability scores to determine the chance for success when a character tries to perform a basically simple action. Anyone should be able to accomplish some things, like jumping across a chasm as wide as he is tall, with at least a reasonable chance of success no matter how low the character's dexterity is. At the low end of the dexterity scale, the system in the article is certainly more fair than

the system that Jonathan's reasoning suggests. A character with a dexterity of 5 wouldn't live long in an adventure with a lot of "dexterity checks" if the player had to roll 5 or less on 3d6 every time a check was taken. The chance of doing so is a shade over 3%. It doesn't seem overly generous to give the character a base figure of 25% instead; he's still going to fail his share of dexterity checks and pay the price for being clumsy, but at least he's got a fighting chance — or a chance to fight, if you prefer. No one in the playing group will like the 3d6 rule very much, especially if the clumsiest character also happens to be the party's only cleric.

Katharine's system is more difficult to justify toward the higher end of the dexterity scale. If jumping across a small pit is no big thing, and even the clumsiest of characters can do it with a reasonable chance of success, then why should anyone with above-average dexterity or better have any trouble at all? For those of you who agree with Jonathan, try tinkering with the system: Award 5% per point up to 10, and 10% per point after that, up to a maximum of 99% at 15 and above. This puts all characters with dexterity of 15-18 on equal footing, so to speak, which addresses Jonathan's complaint. It also attaches some significance to the range of dexterity scores from 11 through 15; if the players in your campaign know that you use a system like this, it might give them some more to think about during the character-generation process.

Or, you can keep Katharine's system intact, reasoning that the "5% per point" system already does make each point of dexterity (or whatever) significant — and it already has the potential to make players think harder during character generation; even if you're not planning to run a thief, you might want to assign a high score for your character's dexterity to increase his chances of making a five-foot leap across a six-foot-wide pit. Dexterity is a good example to illustrate this way of thinking, because a lot of dexterity checks will probably involve the threat of damage, and may even be life-or-death situations. In contrast, I can't imagine a character's survival resting on a "charisma check," except in an unusual and probably unique situation ("The god of vanity is repulsed by your countenance, and you vanish in a puff of smoke.").

Using the 3d6 system for ability-score checks seems to run contrary to the rule structure for bonuses and penalties for a high or low score. The reaction/attacking bonus for dexterity begins at +1 for a score of 16 and goes up by 1 for each increase in score thereafter. The defensive adjustment bonus to armor class starts at 15 and improves by 1 for each point of dexterity higher than that. Each of these points of improvement represents a 5% increment; similarly, penalties and bonuses on thieving abilities are also awarded in 5% increments. Katharine's system seems to be a logical outgrowth of this reasoning.

Is it simpler to not convert the ability score into a percentage and use a d20 instead? Sure, in most cases. But the percentage method does allow the DM more flexibility. He might want to modify the base chance by some strange number like 8% or 13%, or he might want to allow a 1% or 3%

chance of something really weird happening. For times like this, percentile dice are obviously necessary; at other times, a d20 would probably do. But don't switch back and forth between two types of dice for ability-score checks, or the players might figure out when you've got something really devious on your mind. — KM

Rustbusters

Dear editor:

In "The ecology of the rust monster" (issue #88) there are a few errors. The *Monster Manual* states that they inhabit and roam only dark subterranean places. The article states that Gulgathas issued orders that all smithies in his major encampments are to be encircled with sloped stakes or spears to discourage the attacks of such creatures. But such monsters are not supposed to be there in the first place.

Since the article states (or suggests) that they do, it would be a safe assumption to say that rust monsters might roam open areas at night when there is not much going on and no light. Or, that they might come out in search for more or better metals. This point might help to clarify the article.

John H. Cantrell II
Jeffersonville, Ga.

Dear Dragon:

In issue #88 I found what appears to be an error in the text. This error is evident on the article describing the rust monster. In the "Notes" section of this article, under captions two and five, there were two statements in which the ", or inches, sign was used. I feel that the author meant to use the ', or feet, sign instead. Is my assumption correct?

William Blandford
Wallingford, Pa.

Dear editor:

There are a few questions raised by "The ecology of the rust monster" and a few old unasked questions concerning the rust monster and its attacks. They are: Do any metal objects get a saving throw against the rust monster's effects? Does a magic bonus add to this save? If a rust monster's blood is collected and bottled, will the bacteria still be active? (If so, adventurers will try this to make good missile weapons to easily destroy enemy armor and weapons.) Finally, can a magic-user isolate the bacteria to make a rusting potion?

Robert J. Watson
Rhineland, Wis.

The rust monster article didn't make the specific point that the creatures might be encountered outside a dungeon, but the example of Gulgathas does imply that such things happen. John is correct in pointing out something that might have confused readers, and the idea of rust monsters roaming open ground could have been explored in the article. The MM cites a "% in lair" figure of 10% for the rust monster, implying that it doesn't stay home much, and that makes sense considering its dietary habits. Carry that reasoning a little further, and it's not hard to imagine a rust monster foraging outdoors at night — especially if no decent meals have wandered down into the dungeon lately. We can assume that the monster has some kind of a homing instinct that enables it to find the dungeon entrance (and its lair) again after an excursion into the outside world. Or, it might stray too far in pursuit of a tasty suit of armor and go beyond the

Letters

range of the homing instinct, in which case other instincts would lead it to search around for a new home — a nearby cave, perhaps, or how about that tunnel that leads into the castle basement?

The problem with the "inch" marks is not a problem. Assuming we're using underground scale (1 scale "inch" = 10 feet), the monster's sense of smell has a range of 90 feet (not 9 feet, as William suggests), and a range of 20 feet when detecting non-ferrous metals. The golem moves at half speed on the second round after being rusted — 3", or 30 feet, per round instead of its normal 6" movement rate.

In outdoor scale, where 1 "inch" = 10 yards, the golem's movement rate is changed accordingly: 60 yards per round normally, 30 yards per round after being rusted. However, we recommend that you keep the rust monster's sense-of-smell range at 90 (or 20) feet outdoors instead of increasing it to 90 (or 20) yards. In the same way that a spell's area of effect is always measured as 1" = 10 feet, the "area of effect" of a rust monster's nose should always be the same quantity regardless of which scale applies.

Robert's questions can all be answered by examining the article. Non-magical metal items don't get a saving throw against the rust monster's attack, but even in the worst of cases the monster's attack isn't a sure thing. The only way a metal item can "save" against a rust monster's strike is for the rust monster to fail its roll to hit. A stationary, "defenseless" hunk of metal would be AC 10 for purposes of determining whether

the monster hits. A creature of 5 HD has an 80% chance of hitting AC 10, which means that the target has a 20% chance of not being rusted by any particular attack.

As pointed out in the article and in the Monster Manual description, magical items do get a saving throw — in many circumstances, at least. If the item (usually armor or weaponry) is enchanted to +1 or higher, it gets a saving throw of 10% per "plus." In other words, a +1 sword gets a saving throw of 19 (giving a 10% chance of rolling either a 19 or 20); a +3 sword gets a saving throw of 15; and a +5 sword gets a saving throw of 11. Magical items without a "plus" rating get no saving throw at all, but the DM might want to overrule this in a special case.

Note 6 makes it pretty clear that the bacteria inside the rust monster will not survive outside the monster's body. This would make it impossible to bottle rust monster blood and use it as an effective missile weapon, and very difficult (at best) for anyone to concoct a rusting potion using the bacteria. — KM

(which only takes one round), the rusting process cannot be reversed, except possibly by a limited wish or wish spell. Dispel magic won't undo the effects of magic once they have taken place; for instance, it won't un-burn something that's been hit with a fireball spell.

Dispel magic might be useful if an object has just been introduced to rust dust. If the spell can be gotten off within the one-round period when the rusting is occurring, it will (if successfully cast) negate the effect for that single round. If, at the same time, the item is quickly moved outside the dust's area of effect, it would be saved. To determine whether the casting of dispel magic succeeds in a case like this, figure that it's being used against 5th-level magic (since a rust monster has 5 hit dice). Or, you can avoid the whole question by ruling that something affected by rust dust falls into the category of "a specially enchanted item" (as per the dispel magic spell description), and thus dispel magic can't affect it in any event. — KM

Globe power

Dear Dragon:

When wearing the necklace of alteration ("Five new enchanted objects," #86), is the character's dexterity adjustment overridden by the effects of the globes, as well as the character's armor adjustment? Also, does the necklace override the effects of other magical items such as a ring of protection or bracers of defense?

Tim Kornides
Latrobe, Pa.

The article says that the effect of the necklace takes precedence over "anything being worn or carried by the user of the necklace." This does include magical rings, bracers, and other physical items that affect armor class. It does not include such things as a character's dexterity bonus, which is still applied as an adjustment to what would otherwise be the user's AC. The armor class of someone being affected by the necklace can be temporarily altered by some magical means, such as a shield spell (which actually changes armor class) or protection from evil (which does essentially the same thing). — KM

Undispellable

Dear Dragon:

I have a question about rust dust (issue #86). If a dispel magic is used upon the object that has been deteriorated by the rust dust, will the spell alter the effects of the rust dust?

Jason A. Dunham
Delmar, N. Y.

Sorry, Jason — that seems like something that's beyond the power of dispel magic to accomplish. If the dust has taken effect and run its course

Just plain magic

Dear editor:

Are the *Heart of Light* and the *Ebon Stone* from the *Twofold Talisman* in issues #84 and #85 considered as artifacts or relics?

Stan Mah
Alhambra, Calif.

Dear Dragon,

A few things troubled me after reading the article in issue #89 about six magical shields. Are those shields considered relics in the sense of their frequency and powers? Do they have side effects or the like? And are there other shields similar to them?

Benjamin P. Weiss
Delmar, N. Y.

None of these objects were designed as artifacts or relics. In general terms, neither the "Talisman" items nor the shields are powerful enough or versatile enough to qualify (And just what are the qualifications for "relicship"? That sounds like a good idea for an article.) The *Heart of Light* has a gold-piece value higher than that of many artifacts and relics, but that fact alone doesn't give it any special status; it is possible to randomly roll up a gem with a value of 1,600,000 gold pieces, but that doesn't make it an artifact.

The *Heart of Light* and the *Ebon Stone* might be defined as unique magic items — one of a kind, but still at the same level of power as most of the non-unique magic items. Likewise, each of the magical shields has an individual history and could be "considered unique. Or, maybe a wily wizard has figured out a way to simulate or duplicate the powers vested in these items to make other magical shields (or perhaps something like a suit of armor with the properties of, Dzance's Guardian). They can be used on a one-shot basis, or you might not want them to be unique; that's a matter of preference. — KM

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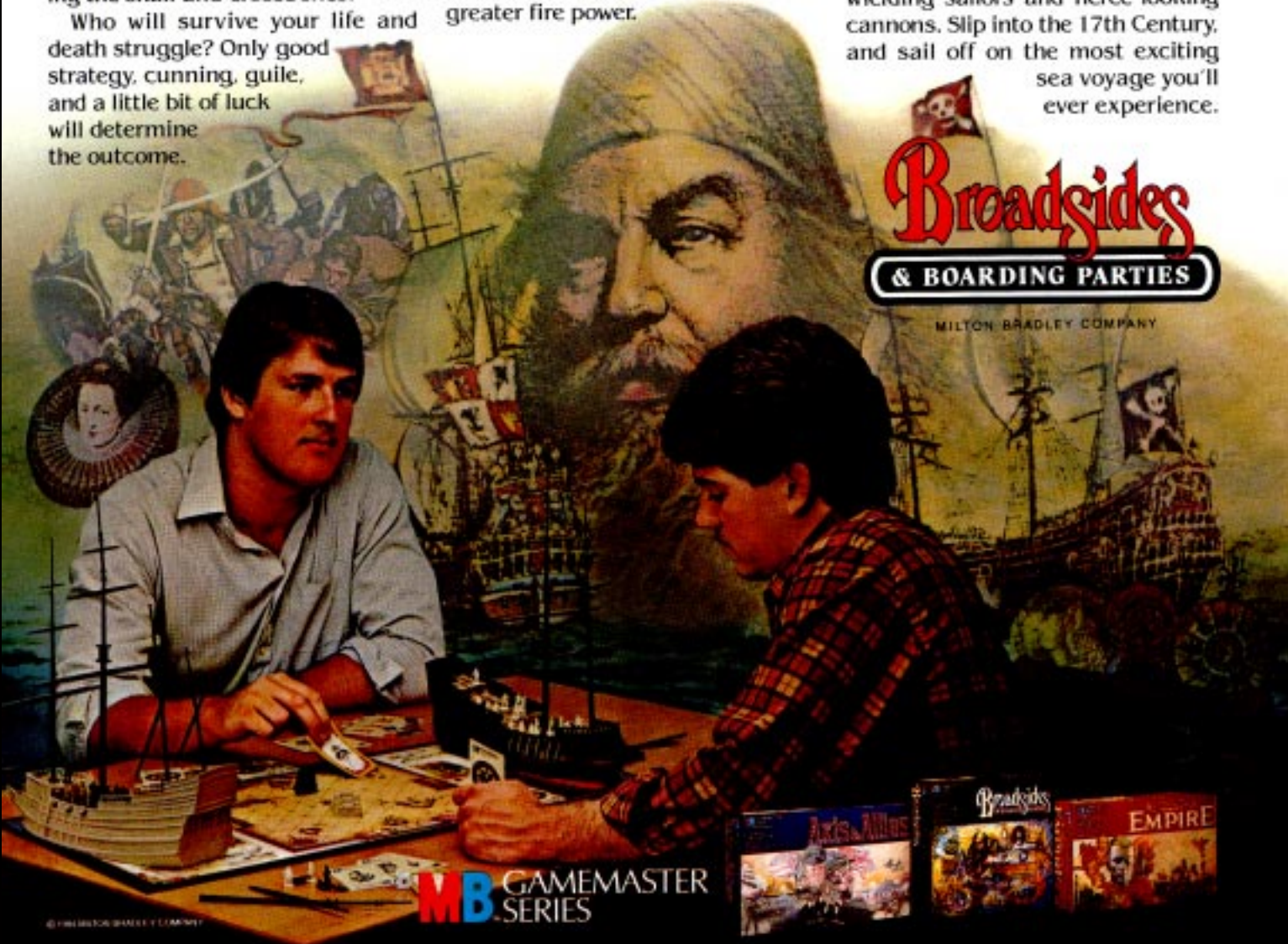
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I have finally passed the limit of that which I can endure without reply. Disparaging remarks about evil PCs, from both game designers and players, leap from the pages of this magazine. Passing insults can be ignored, but Ms. Kerr's letter in issue #89 was the last straw. Everyone is entitled to an opinion, but condemning what should logically be one-third of all characters on the basis of one warped campaign is ridiculous. It's about time someone stands up for the "bad guys."

To take a cue from E. Gary Gygax, "Good isn't stupid." Evil isn't stupid either, nor is it sick. No reasonably sane party of *characters* would take the course of action taken by the party Ms. Kerr writes about. If these actions follow the precepts of *any* alignment, it is chaos, and chaos and evil are far from interchangeable, as any LE character would tell you. However, insanity seems to be a better choice to explain the actions of those characters. (See DMG p. 84, specifically sado-masochism and homicidal mania.)

I have played the D&D game since its first publication in 1974, and my longest-lived and most powerful character is a wizard of lawful evil alignment, as are his wife (a thief), their adventuring companions, and their henchmen. In nine years of regular campaigning we have never reached the level of depravity described in "Bob's" campaign, nor has any other group of evil PCs with which I am acquainted. We have robbed princes and merchants, tortured prisoners for vital information, poisoned a pesky paladin, and helped a goblin army destroy an elfen outpost. We have *also* rescued a very good princess, stopped a demon invasion, and broke the local assassins' guild. The actions of an evil party? Certainly. And no PC has ever stolen from the poor, destroyed, killed, or tortured without cause. Why? Because they are acting like proper evil characters!

The DMG states that "Evil . . . does not concern itself with rights or happiness; purpose is the determinant" and a quick look at the specific evil alignments shows what the one and only purpose is: power. If a seemingly good act is the most expedient method of increasing one's power, any proper evil character will take that course. Actions which threaten one's power with no potential for gain will be avoided. Robbing the poor, immolating temples and clerics, and raping princesses do not provide the character with any advantage and gain one numerous enemies. Rob a wealthy merchant and you may have to face several well-armed fighters, which is bad enough. But start stealing from the starving poor and you may end up with hundreds of scythe and pitchfork-wielding peasants, a potentially fatal situation for even the most powerful PC. Any group of characters which did perform such heinous deeds would be continually hunted and harassed. This is hardly conducive to expanding one's power. The DM must make the consequences of any such actions evident — heads adorning poles and bodies swinging from ropes were common sights during the medieval times. This is why, to belie Ms. Kerr's assertion, most campaigns with evil PCs do not degenerate to the level described.

As to Ms. Kerr's assumption that those who play evil PCs are "weak," I must ask: Who is weaker — he who resists temptation or he who walls himself in so as to face no temptation? Any player of a good character who had that character murder an innocent, helpless victim could, and should, suddenly find himself at a lower experience level due to alignment shift, or even, as in the case of paladins and good clerics, stripped of all his power. The "thrill" of committing such an act is hardly worth the cost, so this is no temptation. But what of the evil thief who, in the course of robbing a manor, chooses not to kill the sleeping guard, knowing that he could do so easily and with no repercussions? Which player has shown greater strength of character?

No, Ms. Kerr, you were not "making too much of a simple game." Our games can tell us a lot about ourselves. But your conclusion that any campaign with evil PCs must deteriorate to the level you described, based on observation of a *single* campaign allowed to get out of hand by all involved, is as absurd as assuming, after one visit to the police drunk tank, that anyone who drinks socially will become an alcoholic.

Scott Hicks
Nanuet, N.Y.

* * * *

Katharine Kerr's letter concerning role-playing evil player characters was quite interesting. However, there are a few additional points to be made.

In a world where the PCs tend toward a good alignment, the campaign is typically a struggle of good (the PCs) vs. evil. Guess who gets to play the evil? Yup, the DM. He or she is continuously plotting against the players' characters trying to think up some new and ingenious way for them to meet their doom while they are on an adventure. Is the DM heading for the psychiatrist's couch?

Probably not, since the purpose of the game is for the players to have fun, and not many people think of dying as a fun time. So the DM who continually succeeds at killing off most of the PCs in his world will soon find himself without any players. No players implies no campaign, which implies no more design of nasty plots — sort of a self-quenching problem.

The DM who thinks of all these nasty plots but allows his players to work their way through them isn't going to go off the deep end either, since by allowing the PCs a way out he is telling us that he sides with the good guys.

An evil campaign, if the players role-play their characters correctly, will fall apart due to the nature of the beast. Treason, revenge, and backstabbing will come to the forefront, destroying any teamwork which may exist. The PCs will spend more time killing each other than playing in the campaign. Due to the high turnover rate in PCs, level advancement will be very slow. The few PCs that do survive and make it to a respectable level will either have the rest of the PCs completely afraid of dealing with them, or will have the PCs gunning for them to get their stuff. In any case, the campaign grinds to a halt.

For an evil campaign to succeed (within the structure of the AD&D rules) two steps have to be met. The first, as shown in the previous paragraph, is that the players must incorrectly role-play their characters. The second is that the DM must mess with the game balance. As mentioned earlier, the AD&D game is set up as a good vs. evil struggle where the game balance is tipped slightly in favor of the forces of good. In this way, the players in a campaign composed of PCs striving toward a good cause will win their battles — if they play the game to the best of their abilities. If the DM holds this game balance in his evil campaign, the PCs will not survive. So, he adjusts the balance, and the player characters advance.

By meeting these two steps, the DM and the players have mutated the game. Their version can't be that much fun to play in the long run.

Steve Null
Indialantic, Fla.

* * * *

I would like to congratulate Stephen Inniss on his excellent article "Survival is a group effort" in issue #89. I find the growth and decline of populations in the AD&D world an interesting topic and was ecstatic to find an article on this subject.

There is, however, one item which has confused me about the life spans of different races which was not answered in the article. This problem is associated with the levels of fighting characters who are of various races. The conflict is with the length of time that a demi-human character can spend adventuring, as compared to that of the shorter-lived human or humanoid characters, this factor then influencing the level of the character.

Here is an example: Two characters start adventuring as first-level thieves at the same time. One is human, the other an elf. Therefore, both have the advantage of having no limit to the level of experience that they can reach. The human starts at age 19, and the elf at age 105 (each starting at the youngest age he can, as detailed on page 12 of the DMG). After constant adventuring for 17 years, each character is now level 12. The human is now age 36, soon ready to retire from journeying, while the elf, at age 122, can continue adventuring for centuries more. At this rate, the elven thief can attain a phenomenal level of experience in his lifetime.

It is easy to see how the varying life spans can cause certain problems with the level of character in a game. How is this problem remedied, so that there is a balance among the races, and so the longer-lived beings don't become too powerful in their world, or in someone's campaign?

Eric Herman
Marlboro, N.J.

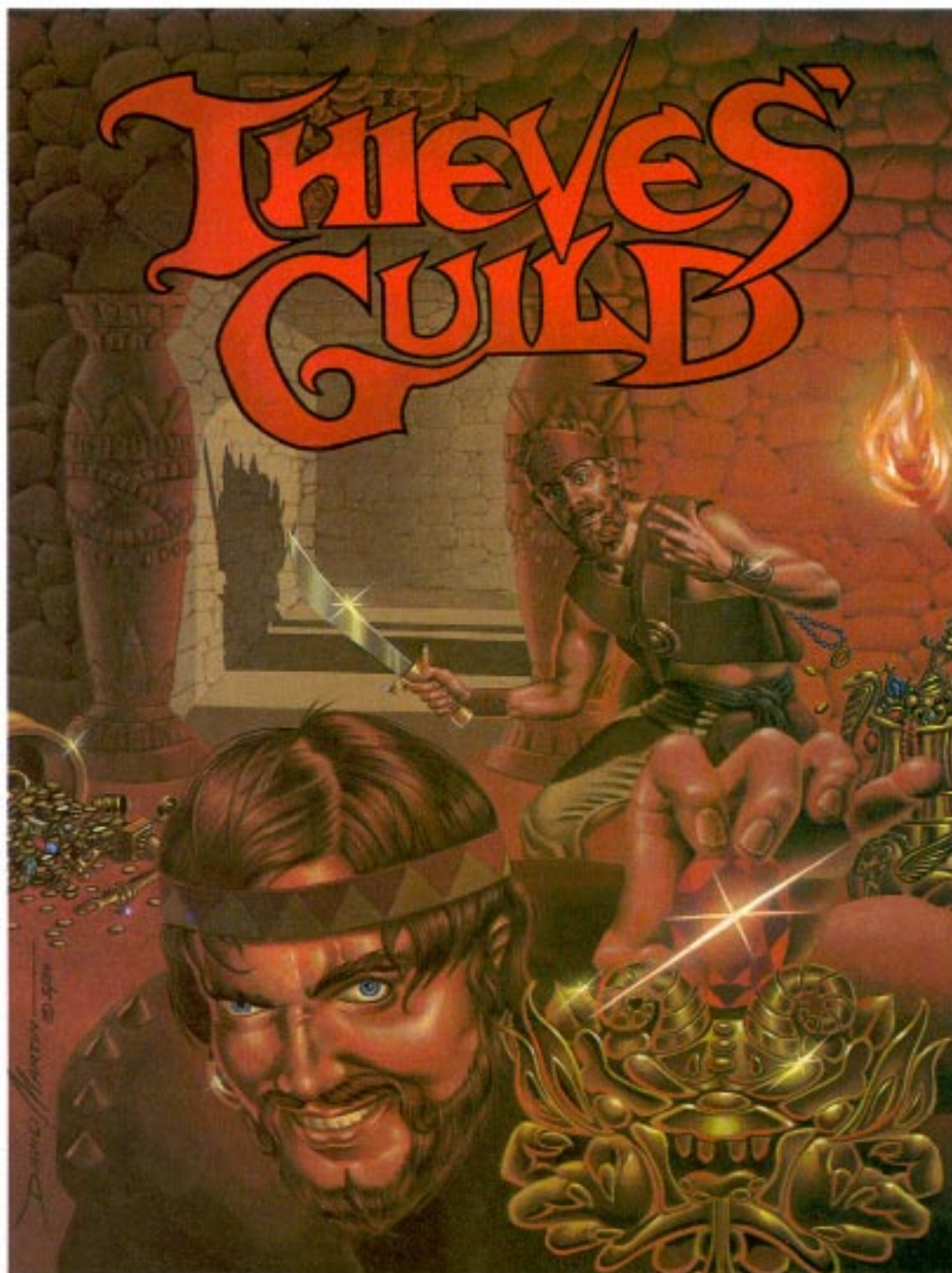
* * * *

I think both Arn Ashleigh Parker and Steven Winter missed the point in their articles on falling damage (#88). First and foremost, the damage inflicted on any object via falling occurs because of the force it is subjected to, not the velocity it has prior to impact. It is the sudden compression of body tissue that counts. If someone fell 100 feet into a very large pile of feathers, the same velocity and kinetic energy would be achieved during the fall, as if he had fallen on concrete, but with a distinctly different outcome.

Force, according to Mr. Newton, is equal to the product of an object's mass and its acceleration. Because mass is constant, the impact force on an object is due to the acceleration, which is

(Turn to page 104)

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The goristro revealed

Big, dumb demon brought out of hiding

by E. Gary Gygax

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How could a demon as huge as a goristro be missing? How the entire race of the brutes?! That seemed to be the case, for Monster Manual II mentioned these dreaded dwellers on the Abyssal Planes, but nowhere within the book could any other information be found about them.

Time to put on the double-billed detective's cap and find the culprit. After yours truly summoned Dr. Mentzer to assist, we began a full-scale investigation. Nothing on the computer, nothing amidst the pencil draft, nothing anywhere. The clever swine must have used a powerful dweomer to avoid detection — but to no avail, good readers! The typewriter is mightier than any demon, let alone a clan as stupid as the goristroi. Here, then, are the vital statistics which will enable you to include these foul fiends in your AD&D® game campaign.

DEMON

Goristro (Major Demon)

FREQUENCY: *Very rare*

NO. APPEARING: 1

ARMOR CLASS: -2

MOVE: 15"

HIT DICE: 20 (+6/die)

% IN LAIR: 20%

TREASURE TYPE: B, C

NO. OF ATTACKS: 2 & 1

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 12-30/12-30 & 5-40

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 60%

INTELLIGENCE: *Low*

ALIGNMENT: *Chaotic evil*

SIZE: L (21'-24' tall)

PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil*

Attack/Defense Modes: *Nil*

LEVEL/X.P. VALUE: X / 16,200 + 35/hp

These huge demons are collectively known as goristroi. One can be found on nearly any plane of the Abyss, for they are adaptable and much desired by the rulers of the place to serve as engines of destruction. Demon lords and princes are able to command the goristroi and have them serving as guardians, enforcers, and so on. The hulking goristroi are too stupid and bestial to do more than carry out their orders.

The attack mode of these monsters consists of two clubbing smashes with their long and very powerful arms. Each is equal to a *crushing blow*, so material struck must be



saved for. In addition, a stamping attack can be made against any opponent of 6' or less height which is within 10' of these brutes. They hurl boulders as do cloud giants (1"-24" range for 2-24 points of damage). Goristroi also have the following spell-like powers which they can employ one at a time, one per round, at will: *detect illusion*, *detect invisibility*, *fear* (as a wand, by gaze), *gloom* 60' r. (equals one-half darkness condition), *levitation*, *spider climb*, and *teleport without error* (once per day only).

Even the lowliest of goristroi can be harmed only by +1 or better magic weapons. All of them are immune to cold, fire, poison, and poison gas. They regenerate at the rate of 1 hit point per turn. They have both *infravision* and *ultravision*.

As noted in the list of statistics given above, goristroi receive 6 hit points per hit die in addition to whatever is rolled, giving each hit die a range of from 7-14 instead of the usual 1-8. Goristroi with 140-160 hit points are 21' tall and can only be hit by magic weapons of +1 or better. Those with 161-200 hit points are 22' tall, and also are hit only by +1 weapons. If hit points fall in the range of 201-240, the beast is 23' tall and is hit only by +2 weapons or better. The largest goristroi have 241-280 hit points, are 24' tall, and are hit only by +3 weapons or better.

Goristroi can do siege damage to constructions and large objects in the same way that giants and golems can. Damage figures given below are per round of attack, with no other activity allowed to the goristro in that round.

Points of Damage Against				
		Soft	Hard	
Wood	Earth	Stone	Rock	Bronze
4	1	3	2	1

As can be seen from the foregoing, the goristroi are major amongst their ilk because of their ability to absorb damage and to mete it out. They are stupid and otherwise limited in power, being unable even to *gate* in other demons. The vast majority

(90%) of goristroi encountered will be in the service of some Abyssal ruler, blindly carrying out the duties assigned to them with complete fanaticism. There is never a question of retreat or morale when dealing with these brutes. They will always continue to follow their given commands until completion or death occurs.

Some symbol of servitude will be worn by goristroi ruled by a lord or prince, whether it be a collar, arm or wrist band, implanted symbol, or whatever. Such devices typically have the power to convey telepathic commands to the wearer as well as serve as tracking devices should the masters wish to know the whereabouts of their servants. Without direct command or supervision, goristroi tend to wander off on destructive rampages of their own direction and desire.

Goristroi are vaguely reminiscent of giant bears, although their shoulders are broader, their visages appearing to be a nightmarish cross between bison and human, and their hands and feet disproportionately large, splayed, and humanlike.

MORE MISSING TEXT

It seems that every time I open Monster Manual II, I find something else which was omitted from the material I submitted. While some errors are bound to creep in, I am beginning to suspect that I am being faced with a printer's devil. Okay, so my puns are worse than usual. The upshot is, no description of the appearance of a movanic deva was included. Here is the portion dropped from my typed manuscript copy:

"Movanic devas have skin of pale rose color. Their hair is of coppery red and their eyes of metallic coppery hue. Their wings are rosy white. They otherwise resemble humans of the most superior sort."

If any of you find portions of descriptions missing, do let me know. Meanwhile, I am looking for errors and omissions which originated from my own carelessness. m

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Realistic vital statistics

A new system for figuring heights & weights

by Stephen Inniss

According to both the Monster Manual and the Dungeon Masters Guide, the average dwarf in the AD&D® game stands four feet tall and weighs 150 pounds. To some, the weight given may seem a bit high, even for so stocky and dense a creature as the typical dwarf is supposed to be. Well, it is high. In fact, a six-foot-tall man built on the same lines would weigh more than 500 pounds!

This is not a guess, but the result of a simple calculation. If a dwarf stood six feet tall (1½ times taller than four feet) and retained the same proportions he had at the four-foot height, he would weigh (1½ cubed) times as much: 1½ times 1½ times 1½ times 150 pounds is about 506 pounds.

The basis for the calculation performed above is a fundamental rule of solid geometry. The weight (or volume) of an object is proportional to the product of its linear dimensions (height, length, and width). This can be demonstrated with a set of

cubes (6-sided dice are ideal). If, for instance, a cube is made twice as long, twice as wide, and twice as high as it was, its weight is increased eightfold: 2 times 2 times 2, or one factor for each dimension. The same rule applies to any object, for any increase or decrease in size. (If you have 27 dice available, the results of a threefold increase in each of the three dimensions can be shown; 3 times 3 times 3 is 27.) Conversely, if something is reduced by 20%, to eight-tenths of its former height, and its proportions in all three dimensions remain the same, then its new weight will be (0.8 cubed) times the old weight: 0.8 times 0.8 times 0.8 is 0.512, so the object's new weight is a little more than half of what it formerly was.

Such a simple and straightforward relationship may be presumed to hold in the AD&D game universe just as it does in the real world, so that the probable weight of any size creature can be calculated, given

an initial height and weight for comparison and assuming no change in proportions.

The table below gives weights for human-shaped creatures of various heights, based on proportions of the typical human male in the AD&D game (6 feet tall, 175 pounds). With the exception of the first entry, the weights given are rounded to the nearest pound.

Height (ft.)	Weight (lbs.)	Examples
½	1/10	galltrit
1	1	jermlaine, booka
1 ½	3	brownie
2	6	leprechaun, sprite
2 ½	13	pixie
3	22	gnome, halfling, kobold
3 ½	35	
4	52	dwarf, goblin
4 ½	74	mountain dwarf
5	101	elf
5 ½	135	half-elf
6	175	orc
6 ½	223	hobgoblin, tabaxi
7	278	bugbear, gnoll
7 ½	342	
8	415	yeti, gullan
8 ½	498	
9	592	ogre, troll
9 ½	696	
10	811	giant troll
10 ½	939	hill giant, ogre mage
11	1080	
12	1402	fire giant, stone giant
13	1783	ettin
14	2227	mountain, giant
15	2739	frost giant
16	3324	
17	3987	
18	4732	cloud giant, titan
19	5566	
20	6491	
21	7515	storm giant

With radical differences in build or composition, some of the creatures listed, might be expected to average as little as half or as much as twice the weight given. The stocky dwarves, for instance, are probably at least as heavy as elves, and the broad-bodied fire giants probably weigh as much as frost giants. A difference of more than a factor of 2, however, is unlikely in flesh-and-blood beings. Even extraplanar creatures might be expected to weigh about as much as their less fantastic equivalents.

While giants can be expected to bulk about as large as indicated, they might not actually weigh that much. If they did, they

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would probably collapse into hamburger when they tried to stand up. This is because weight increases with the product of the three linear dimensions, but structural strength only increases with the cross-sectional area, which is the product of two dimensions. A giant's bones, ligaments, and whatnot are therefore weak in proportion to the weight they must bear. Someone of two times human height has four times the structural strength (2 squared), but eight times the weight (2 cubed). Elephants have proportionately thick legs in an attempt to compensate for this fact; and elephant-sized gazelle would be unable to move.

Most giants in the AD&D game, in the tradition of giants everywhere, show few signs of such an adaptation. Though they are gross and coarse of feature and limb, they are not nearly as thick as they need to be; their proportions are essentially human-like (fire giants, being "almost like dwarves," may be an exception, depending on how thick you think dwarves are). Hill giants, at a mere ten feet tall, are still relatively safe, and the stocky fire giants might be all right, but the larger giants would be in serious trouble if they didn't inhabit an imaginary universe.

Fortunately, their world is a magical one. They are probably supported by some permanent variant of the *levitate* spell, with bone-strengthening magic thrown in for good measure. Interestingly, the larger giants (storm and cloud giants), like the

equally huge titans, have true *levitation* powers — perhaps a natural extension of the talents of their lesser brethren.

While giants might be lighter (though not less massive) than otherwise expected, there is no such good reason why AD&D game dwarves should be extraordinarily heavy. As mentioned before, the official weight would seem to imply a creature with either the build or composition of a cannonball. With bones of stone and muscles that would frighten a bodybuilder, a dwarf still couldn't be expected to weigh as much as 150 pounds. That figure, remember, is only average. At the top of the scale a four-foot-tall dwarf might weigh as much as 174 pounds.

Since this is after all a fantasy game, it might be argued that it doesn't matter how much dwarves are defined as weighing. However, it is just such realistic-looking details as a character's height and weight that make for a more willing suspension of disbelief during a game session. Otherwise, why bother with such statistics in the first place? Plausibility, or "realism" as it is sometimes called, is definitely a factor in the enjoyment of even a fantasy game; the more so where the game makes a relatively close approach to reality.

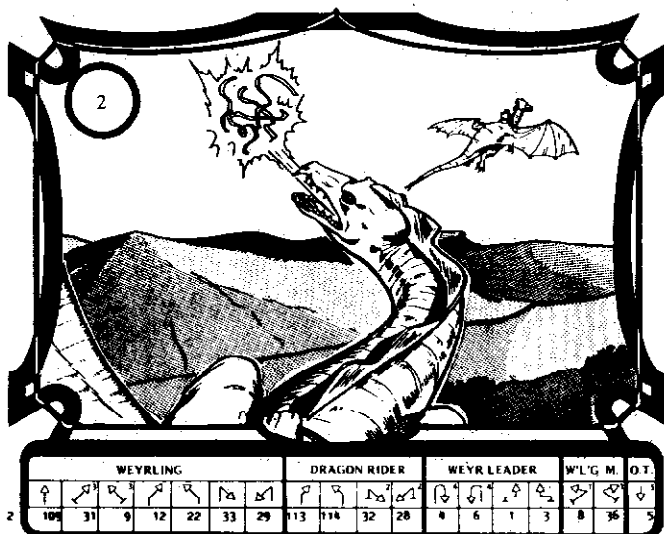
Dwarves are not the only implausibly heavy creatures in the AD&D game. Gnomes and halflings are also extraordinarily dense (or rotund) if the official figures are accepted. This is readily apparent from

the previous table, but it is even more obvious if the various races are compared at a standard height. Given the proportions indicated on page 102 of the *Dungeon Masters Guide*, the table below shows how much average members of the various character races would weigh at a height of 5½ feet:

	Male	Female
Dwarf	390	354
Elf	133	146
Gnome	310	363
Half-elf	130	121
Halfling	370	400
Half-orc	150	145
Human	135	130

Aside from heavy dwarves, gnomes, and halflings (especially female halflings), certain other peculiarities are revealed by this comparison. For instance, elves are more heavily built than half-elves. It is also apparent that human and half-human females weigh less for their height than do their brothers. This is not the case with real-world humans. In fact, the reverse is true, due to differences in build. Though women average lighter than men in absolute terms; they are proportionately heavier, as may be seen if the above exercise is carried out with data from actual human populations. Women mature earlier than men do, and their long bones stop growing sooner. Evidently shorter limbs, along with wider hips and more body fat, more than make up for

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the broader shoulders and heavier musculature of the average male.

Other features of the official height and weight tables are as questionable, and no more difficult to uncover. For instance, human males are 9% taller than females, whereas in the real world this difference is smaller. This ought to be rectified in the interest of fairness if nothing else; combined with the aforementioned slenderness, such low stature ensures that female characters will have a good deal less weight to throw around than do males. As for the non-human races, their sexes should be even closer in height, since they are in other respects more similar than men and women. "Mannish" features, such as a deeper voice, more body and facial hair, a coarser face, and broader shoulders are notable in female dwarves, gnomes, and half-orcs, while these features are reduced or absent in male elves, half-elves, and halflings.

With halflings, there is still another argument against females being smaller than males. This is simply that if they were, they would be at a serious disadvantage. According to the DMG, female halflings average only 33 inches tall. This is only a little more than the height of a one-year-old human, and significantly less than the height of the average two-year-old. It is hard to imagine so small an individual wielding so much as a kitchen knife, much less a dagger. A short sword would almost certainly be a two-

handed weapon. If such small people go adventuring, they risk being stepped on by a careless companion. The average height of gnomes as given in the DMG has very sensibly been increased by half a foot over the figure given in the Monster Manual, from 3 to 3½ feet. This is a large increase (almost 20%), but a necessary one if gnomes (and especially female gnomes) are to be viable as player characters. Halflings should also be taller than indicated in the Monster Manual, to make them more believable as adventurers and to bring them level once more with gnomes.

Another problem with the official height and weight tables is that the humans they produce are too tall. If humans in the AD&D game are to resemble real ones, they should be a good deal shorter. The aborigines of Sweden, Patagonia, and the upper Nile, some of the tallest humans in the world, average no more than 5' 10" or 5' 11" for healthy young men, and in most of the rest of the world 5½ feet is closer to the average. By AD&D rules, men stand

6 feet tall. The official tables are geared to the production of giants; a height of 6½ feet is unremarkable, and 7-foot-tall men are almost commonplace. Arguably, fighter characters should be tall, but this does not apply to other character classes. While it might be argued that a tall character is more dramatic, the fun of playing one soon palls when there are many more of the same.

There are problems with the structure of the official system as well. Height and weight are determined independently of one another, with the result that tall characters are often thin, and short ones stout. The taller or shorter the character, the more likely it is that he or she will be freakishly over or under weight. Also, the fact that character height and weight are in no way related to strength scores produces such anomalies as the 18-strength fighter with the build of a toothpick.

Lastly, the official height and weight tables do not make provision for all the allowable character races. Mountain dwarves are ignored, as are the two special sub-types of halfling.

If the problems described above are to be resolved, then the height and weight tables are in need of wholesale revision. Just such a radically revised system is offered below. While it doesn't slavishly imitate reality

Table A: Average heights (in inches)

Race	Males	Females
Dwarf	48	46
Dwarf, mountain	52	50
Elf, high	60	57
Gnome	42	40
Half-elf	61-66	57-62
Halfling	42	40
Halfling, stout	39	37
Halfling, tallfellow	45	43
Half-orc	61-66	58-63
Human	62-72	57-67

Table B1: Variation from average height

Dice score	Percent variation	
(d1000)	Humans	Others
001-005	-(13-16)	-(10-12)
006-025	-(9-12)	-(7-9)
626-150	-(5-8)	-(4-6)
151-350	-(1-4)	-(1-3)
351-650	none	none
651-850	+(1-4)	+(1-3)
851-975	+(5-8)	+(4-6)
976-995	+(9-12)	+(7-9)
996-000	+(13-16)	+(10-12)

Table B2: Height adjustment by strength

Strength score	Height adjustment
3	-9%
4	-6%
5	-3%
6-15	none
16	+3%
17	+6%
18	+9%

Table C: Character weight by height*

Height (ins.)	Weight (lbs.)	Height (ins.)	Weight (lbs.)
110	625	70	161
109	608	69	154
108	592	68	148
107	575	67	141
106	559	66	135
105	544	65	129
104	528	64	123
103	513	63	117
102	498	62	112
101	484	61	107
100	470	60	101
99	456	59	96
98	442	58	92
97	429	57	87
96	415	56	82
95	403	55	78
94	390	54	74
93	378	53	70
92	366	52	66
91	354	51	62
90	342	50	59
89	331	49	55
88	320	48	52
87	309	47	49
86	299	46	46
85	288	45	43
84	278	44	40
83	268	43	37
82	259	42	35
81	250	41	32
80	240	40	30
79	232	39	28
78	223	38	26
77	214	37	24
76	206	36	22
75	198	35	20
74	190	34	18
73	183	33	17
72	175	32	15
71	168	31	14

* — Females are treated as if 1 inch taller than actual for weight determination

Table D: Weight modifiers by race

Character race	Modifier
Dwarf	1.9
Dwarf, mountain	1.8
Elf, high	0.94
Gnome	1.9
Half-elf	0.97
Halfling	1.5
Halfling, stout	1.7
Halfling, tallfellow	1.3
Half-orc	1.1

Table E1: Variation from average weight

Dice score	Percent variation	
(d1000)	Humans	Others
001-005	-(25-32)	-(19-24)
006-025	-(17-24)	-(13-18)
026-150	-(9 - 16)	-(7 - 12)
151-350	-(1 - 8)	-(1 - 6)
351-650	none	none
651-850	+(1-8)	+(1-6)
851-975	+(9-16)	+(7-12)
976-995	+(17-24)	+(13-18)
996-000	+(25-32)	+(19-24)

Table E2: Weight adjustment by strength

Strength score	Weight adjustment
3	-20%
4	-16%
5	-12%
6	-8%
7	-4%
8-13	none
14	+4%
15	+8%
16	+12%
17	+16%
18	+20%

(this would be difficult, since dwarves, elves, and the like are notoriously scarce in the real world), it does avoid most of the inconsistencies, improbabilities, and inequities mentioned earlier.

A character's height depends primarily on his or her race, as shown in Table A. The average height for human and half-human characters is given as a range, since there is more variation between human populations than between the less numerous and widespread populations of demi-humans. The average height for a human population may be chosen by the DM, or it may be randomly determined by rolling 2d6 and adding the result to the appropriate base number (60 for human males, 55 for human females). For half-humans derived from the same population, the result of the 2d6 roll is halved (rounding fractions up) and added to the appropriate base number. Thus, if the men in a human population average 67 inches tall (60 + 7), women will average 62 (55 + 7). Male half-orcs or half-elves of this stock will average 64 inches tall (60 + 4), female half-orcs 61, and female half-elves 60. This makes adventurers fairly tall on the average, but then they are presumed to be well-nourished individuals.

A peculiarity of half-orcs is that they are shorter than either their human or their orcish parents (orcs average about 6 feet tall according to the Monster Manual). Why this should be so is unclear, but there is no good reason to change it. There is no dis-

proportion involved, and it is not implausible that some factor in the orcish-human mix might produce shorter individuals. Perhaps, for some reason, a half-orc's long bones stop growing early relative to the rest of the body; this would account for a short but relatively broad build.

The height of mountain dwarves has been reduced, so that they do not loom quite so large over their lowland kin. The proportional difference between 4 feet and 4½ feet is considerable — greater, in fact, than that between any two human populations, discounting pygmies. For similar reasons, the height differences between sub-races of halflings have been reduced, though they are still proportionately large. Note that here the stout sub-race of halfling is given a low average height. In the Monster Manual there is some confusion on this point, since while the description says they are shorter, the height given makes them taller than ordinary halflings.

A character may vary from average height by a percentage obtained from Tables B1 and B2. Humans are more variable in height than are demi-humans or half-humans, because of their richer and more varied heritage. Note that the strength score used in Table B2 is the character's strength score unmodified for age. Once calculated and rounded to the nearest inch, a character's height will not change permanently except through the agency of some powerful magic such as a *wish* spell, or possibly as a

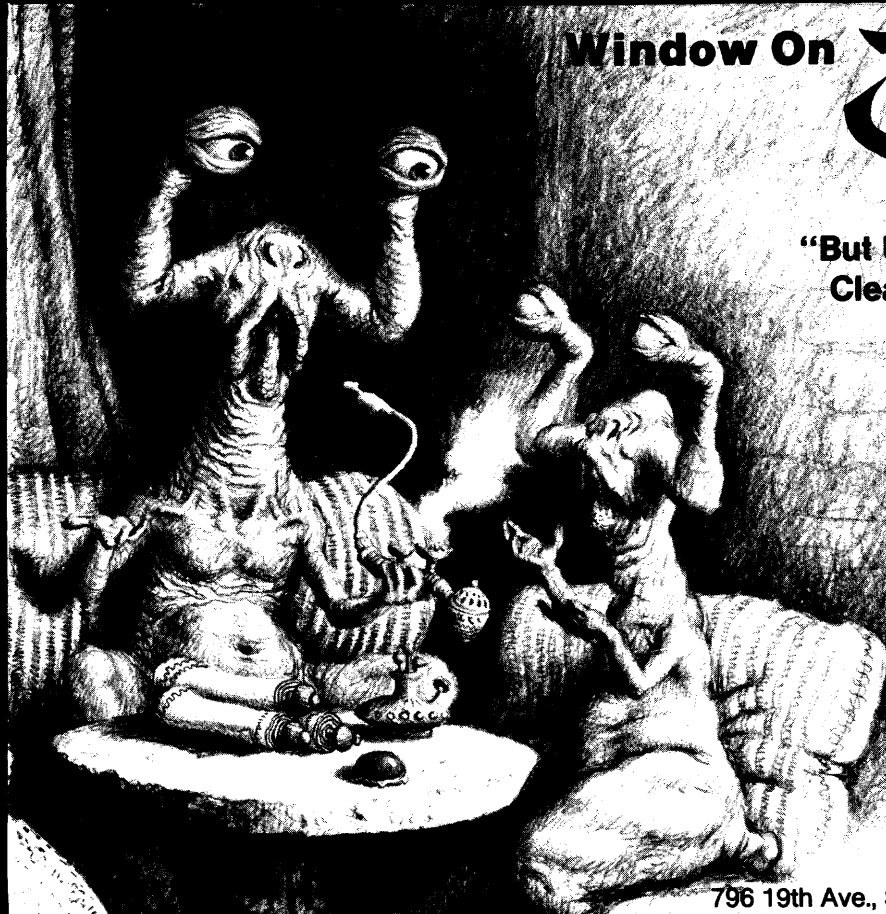
side effect of a permanent change in his or her basic strength score.

Character weight depends on height, as shown in Table C. However, the weight given applies only to human males. All females are considered to be one inch taller than actual for weight determination, and weights for non-humans are multiplied by a number taken from Table D. The result is an average weight for characters of that height, sex, and race. No range of averages is given for humans, since human populations differ less in build than in height.

A character's actual weight is determined from Tables E1 and E2, just as Tables B1 and B2 modify height from the average. The result, rounded to the nearest pound, is the starting weight for the character, and the weight toward which he or she will tend under ideal conditions. A character's weight will change significantly only under special conditions. However, DMs might want to opt to use a character's age-modified strength score in Table E2, in which case some individuals will "fill out" at maturity, and lose weight as they age further.

Tables B2 and E2 ensure that characters with high strength scores will tend to be taller and more heavily built than average, while weak ones will tend, to be short and underweight. There will of course be exceptions, just as in the real world: the short, wiry man of surprising strength, or the tall, massive individual who is a weakling.

While this system has fewer inherent



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problems than the official one, it takes only marginally longer to use. For example, consider the case of Hargor the Hideous, a half-orc. He has a strength of 18 (17 plus age modifier), and on his human side comes from a population in which males average 5'5" tall. If, therefore, he were of average height, he would be 5'3" (60 inches, plus 2½, rounded up). A roll of 749 for height (Table B1) means that he will be 1-3% above average height. A further roll of 2 on a d3 indicates that he is 2% taller than average. His strength score (17) gives him an additional 6% of height, for a total of 8%. In round figures, then, he will be 68 inches tall, or 5'8" — a respectable height for a half-orc, if anything about a half-orc can be called respectable. He will weigh 148 pounds (he is a 68-inch-tall male), times 1.1 (he is a half-orc), with additional modifiers for strength and individual variation. He rolls a 97 for weight, indicating that he is 7-12% underweight. A roll of 6 on a d6 makes him 12% below normal. However, his basic strength of 17 more than makes up for that by adding 16%, leaving him with a weight 4% above average. Hargor's weight, then, when he is lit and well-fed, is 169 pounds.

Hargor's case was a relatively complicated one. Tables were consulted 7 times, and random numbers generated 5 times. A comparable case, using the tables in the *Dungeon Masters Guide*, requires 6 to 8 consultations of the tables, and the genera-

tion of 4 to 6 random numbers. A little more calculation is required under the unofficial system, but nothing that can't be handled in about half a minute or less with pencil and paper.

Another feature of this unofficial system is its flexibility. It can be used to determine the height and weight of any character of any race, player or nonplayer, so long as three bits of information are available: the average height of one of the sexes, the relative difference between sexes, and how much, if at all, the race deviates from human proportions. In some cases it might be necessary to extend Table C, but this is not difficult to do with pencil, paper, and patience, or with somewhat less patience and a calculator.

This feature allows for the use of non-standard character races. For instance, DMs may wish to allow half-ogres, as outlined by Gary Gygax in *DRAGON®* issue #29 and further explained in an article in issue #73. If so, it is not difficult to determine heights for such characters with this system. A less radical departure from official rules is to allow players to choose non-standard sub-races of PC races, but to treat the character in all important respects as a member of one of the official PC races. A caveman, for instance, might be played as a normal human, or a valley elf might be played as a high elf. The difference in such cases is mostly cosmetic — the character has a different coloring, possibly a different height, and almost certainly a different background from the usual type, but has no significant advantages or disadvantages. Some additional information that might be required in the above mentioned cases is given below:

	Ave. height (ins.)		Weight
Character race	Males	Females	modifier
Elf, grugach	54	51	0.95
Elf, valley	66	63	0.9
Half-ogre	85-90	81-86	1.1
Human, cave	60	56	1.4

Half-ogres vary in height according to the background of the human parent. The height given for cavemen assumes a near-derthal type. Other cavemen are merely short, normal humans, possibly more heavily built than average.

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The ecology of the leucrotta

A familiar-sounding but fiendish-looking beast

by Ed Greenwood

From the *Pseudobiblia* of Edygulph Eremmore, naturalist and sage:

One of the ugliest and most cruel of all creatures is the leucrotta, a loathsome carnivorous beast that inhabits wastelands in the wilderness. On its cloven hooves it runs as fast as a medium-sized warhorse, and it savages prey with its jagged, bony jaws rather as sharks do. Humans are its favorite prey, and the "ugly killer" is one of the most dangerous and most feared predators of the wastes because of its cunning and its strange talent for mimicry.

Whether acting individually or in a small group, leucrotta are sly and enterprising. They can develop simple but effective tricks to take advantage of their ability to mimic the human voice, and are often able to lure large groups of travelers to their doom.

One group of leucrotta, for example, came upon and devoured a few pilgrims on the road, took brands from their fire, and

carried these for miles along the road to a long-deserted keep, where the creatures lit many torches and brushpiles along the walls to make it appear inhabited. Then, with their human-like speech, they called out (while in seclusion) to a passing caravan, luring the group inside to rest for the night. The leucrotta slew many of the party as the members split up to explore the dimly lit interior of the stronghold, bounding out of the darkness to bite at faces and necks. The monsters returned later to devour the bodies — after harrying the fleeing survivors and chasing them down the road until dawn.

Leucrotta often lurk along roads and near habitations by night, learning information about humans who live in the area or are passing through the wilderness. They take note of expressions often heard in Common Tongue speech, so as to improve their mimicry. One leucrotta ventured abnormally close to civilization and took to prowling a glen where thieves would come to meet in

the night. With the vocabulary it overheard there, it was soon able to begin devouring thieves who fell into its trap. The creature returned to the glen every few weeks for several years before it was discovered, trapped, and slain.

Those who, for some reason, must dwell near the known haunts of leucrotta are prepared for a raid at any time, and they quickly learn not to engage in conversation with anyone whose face they cannot see. They begin to expect an assault when their dogs start to disappear; leucrotta hate these noisy, persistent trackers and alarm-raisers.

Leucrotta almost always use concealing darkness or terrain cover to draw near to prey (or to remain concealed while the prey comes closer). Then they rush out with great speed, attacking furiously and tearing with their powerful jaws. They will always disable one victim and turn to another, rather than finishing off one at a time, more out of cruelty than voraciousness. The

creatures are skillful at tracking, and exult in the gaining of food as much as in the devouring of it.

The appearance of the leucrotta is not utterly horrifying, but certainly repulsive, nonetheless. Its bare, ragged-edged jawbones give its face and head a ghoulish, skeletal look. It has the body shape of a large deer, but without even a close-cropped coat of fur or hair; its trunk, legs, and cloven hooves seem mismatched with its head, which resembles that of a giant badger or similar burrowing animal, and its tail, which is thin and slightly tufted at the end like that of a lion. If the creature had a more pleasant demeanor, its appearance might be tolerable or even humorous — but such is not the case.

Leucrotta have been known to cooperate with other creatures, such as lamia or even evil naga, for mutual gain, but most prefer to hunt alone or with two or three others of their own kind. Most other creatures shun them, for even those stronger than a leucrotta can never let their guard down near one of them. Leucrotta will attack anything that is at a disadvantage or that they think they can defeat, whether or not the prey is preferred or even edible. Leucrotta will serve only evil creatures more powerful and vicious than themselves, and then only when promised enough reward. They have been occasionally reported to consort with and aid demons, and at least two observers (the adventurer Ironbars of Elcathra and the wizard Gulgath of Mulmaster), who encountered the demon lord Kostchtchie many years (and planes) apart, reported that the demon was accompanied by two astoundingly large leucrotta of exceptionally vicious temperaments, which apparently serve him as bodyguards.

Although they have no personal use for it, leucrotta will gather treasure to bargain with, or to lure prey into traps with. (Experienced travelers know enough not to hastily approach any hoard found in a cave or grotto in the wilderness, for a leucrotta may be planning to take greedy discoverers from behind while they pore over their riches.) If one of a group of leucrotta is captured or injured in battle, the others will not aid it or attempt to rescue it. On rare occasions leucrotta will team up for a short time (perhaps only one assault) with more powerful creatures of like alignment in a hunting group.

Male and female leucrotta (or “leucrotas”; either term is accepted) tend to be of equal size, and appear identical to casual scrutiny. They do not take permanent mates, and the father does not usually aid in the raising of young. Calves are born six months after mating, live and in full control of themselves. They follow their mother for at least four months, learning trickery and hunting skills, and always go off on their own at the age of eight months, or shortly before the mother is about to give birth again. During the first two months after giving birth, the mother goes into a killing frenzy to provide her offspring with

sufficient food. The lifespan of a leucrotta is not known, but is thought to be shorter than that of a human.

Leucrotta tend to wander, following food, and although they like to frequent a “territory” they know well (so as to readily escape pursuit, arrange ambushes, and the like), they do not fight off other predators to defend such an area, and will leave it without hesitation if threatened by very strong foes, lack of food, or natural disaster.

Avoid this creature, travelers and even warriors, unless you are prepared to fight — and do not expect to win. Even some strong bands of men who have gone forth to slay leucrotta have not returned, and most creatures give the “ugly killers” a wide berth whenever possible.

Appendix

1. Leucrotta track as well as rangers do, and try to make this task easier by savaging prey so that it is weakened and slowed, and perhaps leaves a bloody trail when fleeing. In battle leucrotta bite, slash, and tear with their ridged, bony jaws for 3-18 points of damage. They have a chance of disabling or killing prey with a strike to the throat, determined as for the devil dog (see the FIEND FOLIO® Tome): If the leucrotta’s modified “to hit” roll is 4 or more greater than the number required, or a natural 20 in any case, the victim has been hit in the throat. Damage from the bite is the normal amount, but the victim is rendered unconscious from the strike. This comatose condition will last for 2-8 turns, and at the end of this time the victim will die if not revived beforehand by the application of *cure serious* wounds or some similarly strong healing magic.

A leucrotta can kick backwards with its rear legs, even when fleeing, and still retain its full movement rate in that round. The hooves each do 1-6 points of damage (roll “to hit” separately for each hoof) to anyone standing directly to the rear of the creature, or anyone in close pursuit of it. If pressed, a leucrotta can rear up and lash out with its front hooves (for 1-6 damage each), but it cannot do this and kick with its rear hooves in the same round. It can combine a bite attack with either kind of hoof kick in the same round, providing that victims are in a position to be hit by both forms of damage.

The monster can stamp on or trample any target that is lower than itself (on lower ground, fallen, crouching, etc.), striking with both sets of hooves together and crashing down with the full weight of its body, for 4-16 points of damage. If this stamping attack hits, all hoof and bite attacks against the fallen victim in subsequent rounds are made at +2 “to hit,” unless and until the victim avoids being hit for one round and is able to get to his feet. When engaging a fallen opponent, the leucrotta has a better chance of scoring a hit to the throat (see above) because of the +2 bonus “to hit.” If other opponents are nearby, the leucrotta will break off its attack against a fallen foe as soon as it scores a hit to the target’s

throat or when the victim is reduced to one-third or less of his hit points.

2. Leucrotta have hardy constitutions; the climate of the creature’s habitat ranges from subarctic to subtropical. Those encountered in cold regions have a layer of body fat which increases their ability to endure physical attacks; opponents take a -1 penalty to damage inflicted on any successful hit with a non-magical weapon (minimum damage of 1 point per hit). All leucrotta gain a +4 bonus on saving throws vs. disease or poison.

3. All full-grown leucrotta can mimic the human voice with the same degree of skill. Any character within earshot who can understand the common tongue will believe that the voice is that of a human if the character fails to roll less than his intelligence or wisdom (whichever is higher) on d20. Thus, a character with 16 intelligence and 18 wisdom has a 3 in 20 chance of being fooled by the mimicry — on a roll of 18, 19, or 20. A character who is not fooled will recognize the voice as an impersonation, but will not know who or what is doing the mimicry, and may well still decide to approach and investigate. A character who is fooled will not rush forward blindly; he will assume that the voice is that of a human, but may still be cautious about approaching an unseen “person.”

4. Young leucrotta are size M and have 3+1 HD when born. They gain 1 hit die every two months thereafter until at full 6+1 HD and size L status at the age of six months. The bite of a young leucrotta (less than six months old) does 2-12 points of damage, and each kicking hoof does 1-4 points of damage. They are able to mimic the human voice at two months of age, and characters receive a +2 bonus on their attempts to “disbelieve” the mimicry. This bonus decreases to +1 when the young leucrotta reaches four months of age, and is eliminated altogether at six months of age.

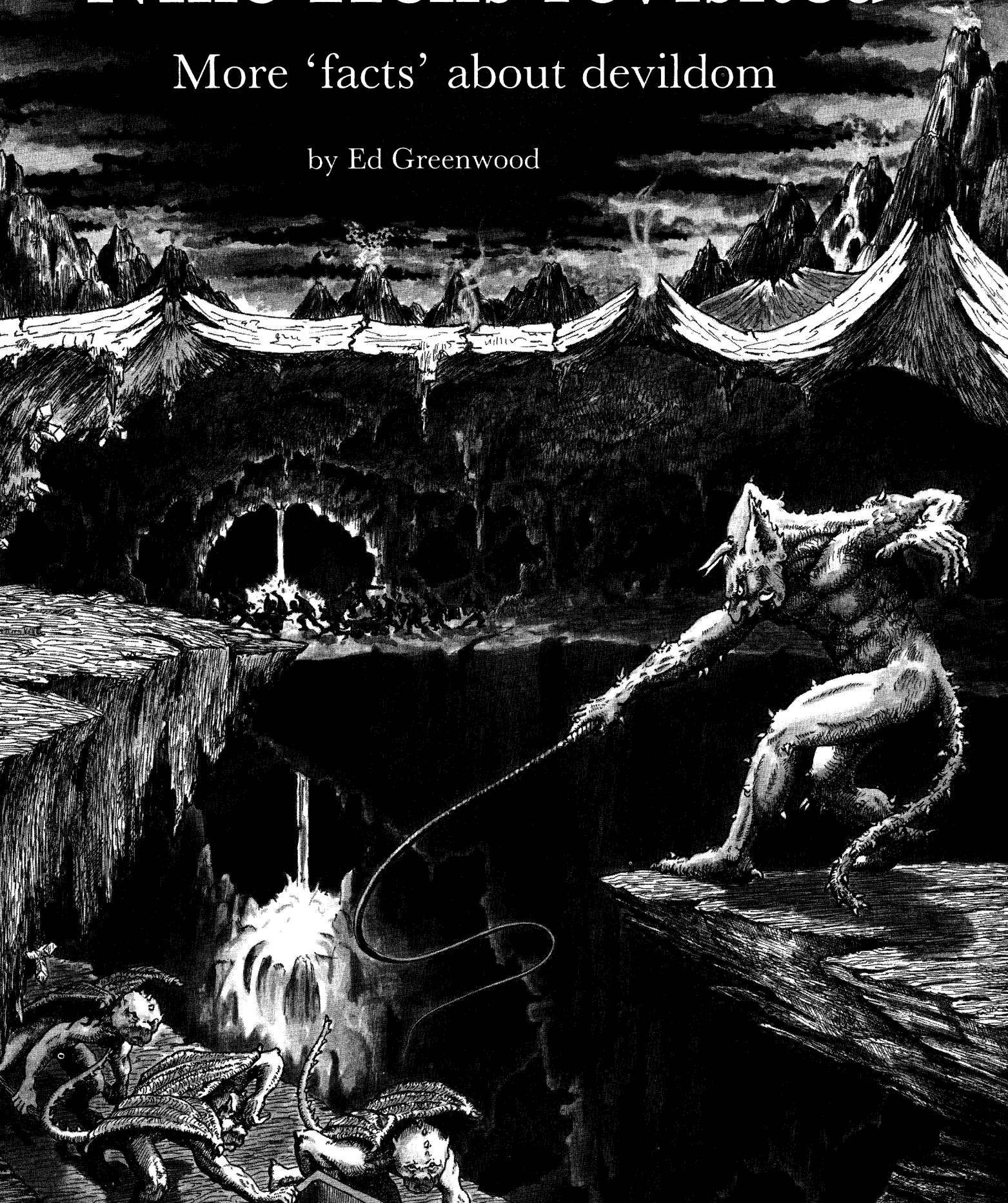
5. If two leucrotta are encountered at once, there is a 50% chance that they are a mated pair (a male accompanying a female who is carrying young). The male will go into a frenzy if either he or the female is attacked, gaining a +2 bonus “to hit” and on damage. If a solitary leucrotta is encountered, there is a 50% chance that it is a single adult of either sex, a 25% chance that it is a female on a hunting spree for her young, and a 25% chance that it is a female accompanied by young (85% chance of one offspring, 15% chance of two) of between 1-8 (d8) months of age.

6. A leucrotta is not overwhelmingly intelligent, but its innate evilness lends it a slyness and cunning not usually found in non-evil creatures of average intelligence. The tricks a leucrotta uses to lure its prey are not overly complex or sophisticated, but are often all the more effective because of their simplicity. One ploy that all leucrotta use from time to time is to imitate the voice of a wounded or diseased character crying out for help — a plea that most good-aligned characters find difficult to ignore.

Nine Hells revisited

More 'facts' about devildom

by Ed Greenwood



Research into the nature and affairs of the diabolic, particularly those specialized investigations that can be carried out only in the Nine Hells, is understandably perilous. Much is yet unknown, or is largely conjecture; here follows more information about devils and their doings, and the Nine Hells, gathered from many scattered sources.

(Editor's note: This article is designed to be used in conjunction with Ed Greenwood's earlier treatise on the Nine Hells, which was printed in issues #75 and #76 of DRAGON® Magazine. However, readers who do not have immediate access to those issues will find that much of what follows here can be used without the earlier information. Issues #75 and #76 are available by mail order; see the list of back issues and order form elsewhere in this magazine.)

Dealing with devils

On the Prime Material Plane, there have always been creatures of all sorts, including men, who worship and/or serve devils. To ensure the survival of these agents (and with them, diabolic influence on the Prime Material Plane), devils have always aided (by "serving under duress") these agents under a detailed code of laws and behavior.

Knowledge of these laws and behavior — in practical terms, the summoning and control of devils, and of their sigils and talismans — has survived down through the ages outside the ranks of diabolic agents, despite the unceasing efforts of devils and their agents to eradicate it. Fear of diabolic attack, and of the possible actions of other beings seeking such knowledge, has kept the identities of the possessors of diabolic knowledge, and the knowledge itself, secret. One can be sure (DMs take note) that player characters' discovery of such knowledge in play, if revealed or communicated to anyone who is not a player character, will bring eventual diabolic attack upon the PCs. Tutors or temples will not knowingly accept talismans and summoning information as gifts or payment for services. If such are unwittingly accepted, it is extremely likely that the tutor or temple will shortly thereafter be destroyed. Note that (according to the official AD&D® rules) the mere handling of, or speaking of any inscriptions on, a talisman will bring immediate response. Devils, or any specific devil linked to the talisman, will appear from the hells within 1-4 rounds — and without specific knowledge of how to control such summoned devils, the summoner is at their (non-existent!) mercy. It must be emphasized that the inscriptions on talismans are never the truenames of devils, and do not give the speaker any power over the summoned devils.

The protected (the word "safe" can never be truthfully used) storage of diabolic talismans is another topic upon which lore is fragmentary and largely silent. The long-

ago wizard Enthor mentions in his writings a fellow mage who stored a talisman in a silver box, its seams sealed with wax wet with holy water; indeed, silver and holy water would seem ideal physical components of any protection (along with locks and traps to prevent uncontrolled access to the storage-place of the talisman). But magic — strong magic — must also form a part of such defenses, and of this, nothing survives in known writings.

Diabolic names

Many sages, diabolic agents, and others who have dealt with devils have repeatedly emphasized the importance of correctly pronouncing the common name of any devil in all diabolic dealings, for the vanity of a devil is a powerful and dangerous thing. Again, it should be noted that the names by which all devils are commonly known are *not* truenames; use of such common names will often *summon* the being concerned from the hells, but the devil will not be under the control of the speaker unless other magical preparations have been made. Here follow what are generally agreed to be the correct pronunciations of the more difficult or lesser-known common names of the known hierarchy of the hells, with accented syllables printed in *italic* type:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Pronunciation</i>
Adonides	Ah- don- <i>eed</i> s
Adramalech	Ah- drama- <i>leckh</i>
Agares	Ah- <i>garr</i> -aiys
Amduscias	Am- <i>doo</i> -see - azse
Amon	<i>Aiy</i> - mon
Arioch	<i>Air</i> - ee - okh
Baalberith	<i>Bahl</i> - bair - ith
Baalphegor	<i>Bahl</i> - feh - gor
Baalzebul	<i>Bahl</i> - zee - bull
Baalzephon	<i>Bahl</i> - zee - fonn
Bael	<i>Bay</i> -ul
Barbatos	<i>Bahr</i> -bah- toss
Bele	<i>Beel</i>
Bifrons	<i>Bye</i> - frons
Bileth	<i>Bye</i> -leth
Caarcinolaas	Kar- <i>crin</i> - oh - lass
Chamo	<i>Chamm</i> - oh
Dispatier	Diss- <i>pay</i> -ter
Fecor	<i>Fee</i> - kor
Goap	Goe - <i>app</i>
Herobaal	<i>Hair</i> - oh - bahl
Herodias	<i>Hair</i> - oh - dee - ass
Hutijin	<i>Hutt</i> - ih - jinn
Machalas	Mah - <i>shall</i> - ass
Melchon	<i>Mell</i> - khon
Merodach	Mare - oh - dakh
Naome	<i>Nay</i> - ohm
Tartach	Tarr - <i>tackh</i>
Titivilus	Tih - tee - <i>vie</i> - luss

More "outcast" devils

Described in the following section of text are nine unique devils who, for one reason or another, have been relieved of their former position or status and exiled to Avernus, the uppermost plane of the Nine

Hells. As such, one or more of them might well be encountered by a party of adventurers who have traversed the Astral Plane and emerged on Avernus — generally the first (and often the last) stop for those who would visit the hells and meet the devils on their own ground.

ARMAROS (Greater Devil)

FREQUENCY: *Unique (Very rare)*

NO. APPEARING: 1

ARMOR CLASS: -1

MOVE: 14"/20"

HIT DICE: 99 *hit points*

% IN LAIR: *Nil*

TREASURE TYPE: *See below*

NO. OF ATTACKS: 1

DAMAGE/ATTACK: *By weapon type +4*

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 90%

INTELLIGENCE: *Genius*

ALIGNMENT: *Lawful evil*

SIZE: L (12' tall, 26' wingspan)

PSIONIC ABILITY: 226

Attack/Defense Modes: *All/all*

Armaros, sometimes called "The Resolver of Enchantments," is the least unhappy of the devils cast out of the present hierarchy of the hells, for his sojourn on Avernus is largely a matter of politics and not punishment, and he is often visited by Asmodeus or certain of the Overlord's emissaries. Other archdevils are forbidden to have contact with him — including Tiamat — and Tiamat's dukes have orders to drive him away from all archdevils or their servants, but not to harm him. This is fine with Armaros, who desires to be left alone to practice and perfect his magical powers anyway.

Due to his talent for magic, both in terms of capacity for innovation and present development, Armaros is potentially too powerful to be allowed the rank of archdevil, for he could well successfully challenge Asmodeus on purely physical terms, given the power base (diabolic servants, wealth, defenses, and communications) of an archdevil. Armaros would require far less in the way of allies and outside aid than other pretenders to the Overlord's throne, and thus could well overcome the masterful politics of Asmodeus, who keeps the archdevils hostile to one another and thus divided, rather than united against him.

And yet Armaros is an asset to the hells, a dweomercrafter supreme and one who has had a hand in the making of many of the plane's magical treasures — an asset that Asmodeus wishes kept loyal (and beholdingly) to himself. Due to long-standing feuds with both Adramalech and Phongor, Armaros could not serve at the court of Asmodeus without imperiling their loyalty to the Overlord, and thus the security of Nessus and of the Overlord's rule, so he was placed on Avernus, separate from the archdevils. If any archdevil is found to have

consulted with him, Asmodeus has decreed, he will be exiled and Armaros will take his place as ruler of a plane — and all of the offending archdevil's dukes, consorts, and officers will be exiled or destroyed. Note the double edge of this stroke: Were this to occur, Armaros would have no staff and thus would be the weakest of the archdevils, perhaps prompting others to challenge his rule of the plane, and thus keeping Armaros weak and beholden to Asmodeus for any support given to bail him out. On the other side, the dukes, consorts, and officers of all the incumbent archdevils have a strong incentive not to let any communication occur between Armaros and their archdevil, and will not let themselves serve as emissaries or go-betweens for such a purpose.

Armaros himself is fairly happy with his lot, in the same way that Geryon is content with his — Geryon enjoys his hunting, and Armaros his spellcasting. Armaros has a free hand to do what he likes on Avernus so long as he neither approaches nor molests Tiamat or her consorts, dukes, and armies — nor those of any visiting archdevil — and so he is feared and hated by the other inhabitants of the plane (such as the other exiles, Tiamat's minor offspring, intruders, and the lesser infernal creatures native to Avernus). Armaros is apt to appear without warning, and harm (or even destroy) them, frustrate their plans or activities of the moment, or even experiment with them to perfect a spell (e.g., transforming or otherwise attacking them). He does such things with calm detachment, sometimes even amusement, and cares nothing for the fate of others. He respects only Asmodeus, and shrewd, elegant, or spectacular uses of magic, and is always seeking to further his own arts; any intruders he encounters will be probed for what can be learned (i.e., wrested) from them, to this end.

Armaros can call upon the following spell-like powers at will, one at a time and once per round: *pyrotechnics*, *produce flame*, *wall of fire*, *delayed blast fireball* (3d6), *ice storm*, *wall of ice*, *continual light*, *read languages*, *read magic*, *detect magic*, *write*, *erase*, *detect invisibility*, *locate object*, *invisibility* *dispel magic*, *hold person*, *hold monster*, *shapechange*, *dimension door*, *blink*, *beguile*, *charm monster*, *mass charm*, *geas*, *restoration*, *resurrection*, *reverse gravity*, *disintegrate*, *wall of force*, *wall of smoke* (equals *wall of fog* in effects), *unseen servant*, *tongues*, *repulsion*, *darkness* 15' radius, *detect lie*, *remove* (or *bestow*) *curse*, *water breathing*, *passwall*, *fire shield* (both versions), *feeblemind* (devils immune), *telekinesis* (6000 gp weight limit), *flesh to stone* (and its reverse), *dancing lights*, *faerie fire*, *light*, *burning hands* (doing 13 points of damage), *ESP flame strike*, *enchant an item*, *permanency*, *spectral force*, *cause critical wounds*, *heal*, *know alignment*, *true seeing*, *identify* and (fulfill another's) *limited wish*, as well as the powers available to all devils (see the Monster Manual). Armaros can cause fear, with effects as for the 4th-level magic-user spell. He is thought to

be the only devil to have developed and mastered the ability to raise a *prismatic sphere*, which he can do once in every 33-day period.

Thrice per day Armaros can pronounce an (un)holy word. He can use any and all symbol(s) once (each) per 24-hour period. He can unleash two *meteor swarms* per day, and in the same time period attempt to *paralyze* one opponent, cast four *cones of cold* (9d4 +9 damage each), and employ two *fingers of death*. He cannot summon or otherwise call upon the aid of any devil. He regenerates 1 hit point every 3 rounds.

Armaros strikes for 2-8 points of damage if fighting barehanded, but is loath to do so, and will seek to escape if caught at a disadvantage. Note that he can only employ one of his awesome array of magical powers in a round, and thus cannot defy diabolic armies or even individual greater devils with impunity. He is currently experimenting with electrical discharge spells (e.g., *lightning bolt*, *chain lightning*) but has not mastered them.

Armaros appears as a grey-skinned, bearded, handsome-featured human male with dark grey, leathery, batlike wings and two short, forward-thrusting horns on his forehead. His eyes are a luminous blue-green. He usually wears a leather tunic and weapons belt, and pouches containing both spell ingredients and ink, quills, and vellum (scraped, bleached hides) for spell experimentation and recording of results. He does not need the ingredients to exercise the powers listed above. (Note that Armaros knows the ownership and precise properties of all diabolic magical items.) Armaros will readily trade magical knowledge with, and (in exchange for magical knowledge) perform spells for, any creature(s) he meets whom he cannot overcome. He feels no strong loyalty to the hierarchy of the hells, and is obsessed with working, and learning more about, magic.

AZAZEL (Greater Devil)

FREQUENCY: *Unique (Very rare)*
NO. APPEARING: 1
ARMOR CLASS: -2
MOVE: 12"/16"
HIT DICE: 97 hit points
% IN LAIR: Nil
TREASURE TYPE: Nil
NO. OF ATTACKS: 3
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 2-16/1-4/1-4 or
by weapon type +4
SPECIAL ATTACKS: See below
SPECIAL DEFENSES: +2 or better
weapon to hit
MAGIC RESISTANCE: 70%
INTELLIGENCE: *Genius*
ALIGNMENT: *Lawful evil*
SIZE: L (10' tall)
PSIONIC ABILITY: 215
Attack/Defense Modes: *All/all*

Azazel, "The Serpent," enjoys combat, but does not take well to being ordered

about by any he deems lesser than himself (this includes all devils except Asmodeus, Mephistopheles, Baalzebul, and Adramalech). As a result of this aggressive rejection of what he deemed undeserved and unfounded authority, he was thrown out of two successive dukedoms, despite being an able general of infernal armies and a master strategist.

Azazel is vain, and often wears rich garments incorporating fur and gold braid, and gaudy, oversized jewelry. He will not cooperate with any devil except those mentioned above unless rewarded, and spends much of his time in self-indulgent amusements such as planning ways to overthrow Tiamat and take control of Avernus. He has lured forth or ambushed and slain no less than three of Tiamat's consorts, and slaughtered great numbers of her lesser spawn.

At will Azazel can call upon the following spell-like powers, one at a time and once per round: *pyrotechnics*, *produce flame*, *wall of fire*, *read magic*, *detect magic*, *detect invisibility* *hold person*, and *polymorph self*. Once per day Azazel can employ *invisibility* on himself, duration unlimited (ceasing when he wills, or when he employs another power; if he struck another creature he would become visible for 1 round, but could thereafter become *invisible* again unless he willed otherwise or used another of his spell-like powers). Thrice per day he can *dispel magic*. His touch causes fear, as he wills. Azazel regenerates 2 hit points per round. (Note that he cannot use a symbol, nor summon another devil.)

Azazel appears as a winged, emerald-green, scaled humanoid with broad (40' wingspan) batlike wings and a snakelike head. His great fangs do 2-16 damage when he bites; his clawed hands and feet do little damage (1-4 and 1-2 each respectively), but he usually prefers to employ weapons such as a three-bladed military fork and a broadsword. Azazel can employ all five attacks (jaws, two hands, two feet) if unarmed and in flight or swooping.

Azazel, like his fellow exile Dagon (see below), shares his name with a demon prince (a cause of mutual displeasure). Azazel was renamed (from "Hazzael," as he was formerly called) by order of Asmodeus, to ensure that his exile was not broken by many summonings to the Prime Material Plane — for the ritual of his summoning had become widely known there — and from whence it was (and is) feared that he would work against the plans of the archdevils, and gather strength to challenge for a place among them. Like Kochbiel (see below), his lighting abilities are still respected in the hells.

CAHOR (Greater Devil)

FREQUENCY: *Unique (Very rare)*
NO. APPEARING: 1
ARMOR CLASS: -1
MOVE: 14"
HIT DICE: 93 hit points

% IN LAIR: Nil
 TREASURE TYPE: Nil
 NO. OF ATTACKS: 1
 DAMAGE/ATTACK: 6-11 or by
weapon type +5
 SPECIAL ATTACKS: See below
 SPECIAL DEFENSES: +2 or better
weapon to hit
 MAGIC RESISTANCE: 65%
 INTELLIGENCE: Exceptional
 ALIGNMENT: Lawful evil (chaotic
 tendencies)
 SIZE: M (6' tall)
 PSIONIC ABILITY: 215
 Attack/Defense Modes: All/all

Cahor, "The Deceiver," is a scheming, masterful actor and mimic who is most skilled in his use of illusions — and is heartily detested even in the hells, for he is chaotically untrustworthy and untruthful, to the point where he became useless in the hierarchy; no underling could act upon his orders for fear of those orders being denied later, and no superior could entrust any task to him. But he is outwardly obedient at all times to archdevils, acting contrary to commands only when not under direct observation by the one who issued them; for such contrary actions Cahor will always have plausible, well-thought-out rationalizations or reasons. Those who have encountered him and lived to grow wiser know that his words can never be trusted.

Cahor now amuses himself by trying to

make Avernus a realm of confusion, where no one but he knows where they stand. Intruders, lesser devils, and greater devils alike he manipulates and misinforms to stir up trouble, create feuds and strife, and upset diabolic plans. Cahor's destruction will be secretly applauded by those devils who inhabit Avernus — but no devils move directly to destroy him themselves, for Cahor's indirect work on the Prime Material Plane, and his efforts to diffuse the activities of intruders into Avernus who seek to strike at the hells, is invaluable. As much of the active "hellish doings" on the Prime Material Plane are Cahor's work as they are that of any of the archdevils; he is energetically evil and has carefully developed contacts on the Prime Material Plane(s). He enjoys engaging in one-sided battles with lemures or intruders, ripping into and rendering opponents with snarling savagery.

Cahor can employ the following spell-like powers at will, one at a time and once per round: *pyrotechnics, produce flame, detect illusion, detect invisibility, polymorph self, audible glamor, spectral force, dancing lights, darkness, wall of smoke* (equals *wall of fog* in effects), *blindness, detect magic, fly* (maneuverability class A, 16" move), *misdirection, ventriloquism, ESP, fire shield* (both versions), *dispel illusion, and mass-morph*. Thrice per day Cahor can cause *confusion* by his gaze, and once per day he can *paralyze* a creature by touch (save vs. spell at -1 to avoid either of these effects).

At will Cahor can generate *fear* in a 10-foot radius about himself. Cahor regenerates 1 hit point per round. (Note that he cannot use a *symbol*, nor *summon* any other devil.)

Cahor's true appearance is rarely seen; he prefers to pose as a man or demi-human, deceiving those he meets with the aid of his *misdirection* and *ESP* abilities. (One adventurer writes that his diabolic nature betrays him; his breath remains uncomfortably hot when he is in this form.) He usually wears a tattered grey robe and poses as an imbecile or deaf-mute. In his true form, Cahor appears as a tall, mottled black- and grey-skinned, horned and bat-winged humanoid. He has black hair, mustache and beard, a human face of cruelly handsome aspect, and a pinkish-white barbed tail which can manipulate knots, keys, fastenings and the like, but is not strong enough to wield a weapon. Cahor's eyes are yellowish-brown; they shine green when he becomes enraged (a rare event). Cahor prefers to employ his powers of illusion in combat, striking from afar with black javelins of iron (he usually carries three such weapons). Hand-to-hand, he prefers to use a scimitar, but will make use of any weapon available.

DAGON (Greater Devil)

FREQUENCY: Unique (Very rare)
 NO. APPEARING: 1
 ARMOR CLASS: -1

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MOVE: 12"

HIT DICE: 91 hit points

% IN LAIR: Nil

TREASURE TYPE: See below

NO. OF ATTACKS: 1

DAMAGE/ATTACK: By weapon type +5

SPECIAL ATTACKS: See below

SPECIAL DEFENSES: See below

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 65%

INTELLIGENCE: Exceptional

ALIGNMENT: Lawful evil (neutral tendencies)

SIZE: M (5' tall)

PSIONIC ABILITY: 211

Attack/Defense Modes: All/all

Dagon is one of the most despised of the diabolic outcasts. The ritual of his summoning became relatively well known among human conjurers, and he was so often summoned to the Prime Material Plane that he began to freely carry on covert dealings with humans and other spellcasters, providing (for a fee, of course) substances found only in the hells for collections and alchemical ingredients, and information to aid in the summoning of fellow greater devils. For these dangerous practices (which weaken all of the devils) and for his unpleasant activities within the hells, Asmodeus changed his name and banished him to Avernus. He was formerly known as Jagon, the least duke in the court of Asmodeus. In that capacity he traveled freely about the Nine Hells as the herald and messenger of Adramalech and



Asmodeus; these tasks are now performed by various pit fiends and dukes.

The "unpleasant activities" referred to above included similar trading of information, including hints as to the truenames and the preferences of various she-devils with regard to an archdevil winning one of their hands to be his consort. For this pandering, he is especially despised by all of the consorts and she-devils in the hells; none will aid him, work with him, or even speak civilly with him.

To make Jagon's exile a punishment rather than a mere inconvenience, and to lessen his treachery against the hells, it was necessary for Asmodeus to end his frequent summonings to the Prime Material Plane. The Overlord accomplished this by forcibly changing Jagon's name to Dagon, the name of a demon prince — an insult to both Jagon and the demon Dagon, and a means of confounding the familiar summoning rituals used by Prime Material plane conjurers. The Overlord did not destroy his former herald because Jagon's continued existence — and knowledge of the consort's truenames — remains a threat to many of the consorts, thus ensuring their loyalty to Asmodeus, upon whose protection they must depend.

Dagon will be pleased and flattered if addressed by his former, proper name, and will try to bargain with any intelligent being whom he perceives to possess the means of escaping or returning from the hells to the Prime Material Plane, offering (honestly and generously) much treasure in return for a service: to seek out certain conjurers (Dagon recalls their names, descriptions, and the locations he was summoned to by each, in perfect detail — although most must be dead by now) and spread the word of his name-change and the means of summoning hence anew. He sees this as the only way out of his present exile, and if he obtains this outlet, he will serve with diligent enthusiasm until he has built up a frequent clientele of summoners again.

Dagon is not a fair or kind bargainer or servant; he firmly believes in a lawful society wherein the stronger rule the weak (devils being the strongest, and distributing their services to summoners is seen as a

form of largesse). He thinks himself above the rulings and laws of Asmodeus, whom he disagrees with. Of the archdevils, he most closely identifies with Geryon, and feels a sort of kinship to the rebellious pit fiends on the fringes of the frigid eighth plane, Caina. Dagon is a most accomplished actor and diplomat when he wishes to be, and often successfully impersonates a fellow intruder or explorer to trap or gain the measure and cooperation of intruders whom he encounters in Avernus. He is master of his own temper, reactions, and visible emotions. He has much treasure, including many items of evil magic — gained from both devils and Prime Material Plane clients — hidden away around Avernus, and will not hesitate to spend some of this wealth to obtain something he wants.

Dagon can employ the following spell-like powers at will, one at a time and once per round: *pyrotechnics, produce flame, wall of fire, ice storm, wall of force, charm monster, hold person, beguile, read magic, read languages, tongues, detect magic, detect invisibility, polymorph self, invisibility, detect lie, locate object, obscure alignment, and misdirection*. Once per day he can cast a *meteor swarm*, and once a day he can create a *wall of thorns*.

Dagon can strike barehanded for 2-8 points of damage, but he prefers to employ weapons — usually a whip and rapier, or some sort of polearm. He regenerates 2 hit points per round. At will, Dagon's gaze can cause *fear* in a single creature within 8" (save vs. spell to avoid).

Dagon usually appears as a red-skinned satyr with a slyly handsome, hairless visage, pointed ears, and short, curving horns like those of a pit fiend. His eyes are green, and shine brightly when he is angry or excited. He wears a weapon-harness (see above for weapons carried) and backpack, and often tries to pretend that he is an unfortunate woodlands creature trapped in the hells and seeking to escape back to the Prime Material Plane, employing his powers of *misdirection* and *obscure alignment* to reinforce this deception.

DUSKUR (Greater Devil)

FREQUENCY: Unique (Very rare)

NO. APPEARING: 1

ARMOR CLASS: -4

MOVE: 16"/22"

HIT DICE: 111 hit points

% IN LAIR: Nil

TREASURE TYPE: See below

NO. OF ATTACKS: 2

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 2-8/2-8

SPECIAL ATTACKS: See below

SPECIAL DEFENSES: +2 or better
weapon to hit

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 85%

INTELLIGENCE: Exceptional

ALIGNMENT: Lawful evil

SIZE: M (6' tall)

PSIONIC ABILITY: 219

Attack/Defense Modes: All/all

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Duskur is an enigmatic and mysterious she-devil, sometimes called "The Dark Lady." She roams the wastes of Avernus accompanied by the skeleton and zombie armies she has raised, having spurned more than one archdevil who offered her his hand (Geryon and Belial are known to have been among her rejected suitors), and chosen to have no mate instead.

Although Amduscias, Malphas, and Goap respect her more than any other of the outcast "rabble of devilkin" that they must protect Tiamat from, they have orders to slay Duskur if possible, and in any event prevent her (or any of the outcast devils) from occupying and fortifying any lair or stronghold on Avernus from which the outcast(s) might gather strength and challenge Tiamat's rule. So Duskur wanders, avoiding greater devils as much as possible. When encountered, she is almost always found within a ring of skeletons who bear her arms, personal effects, and treasure (all types possible) gained from victims.

Duskur can employ the following spell-like powers, one at a time and once per round: *pyrotechnics*, *produce flame*, *wall of fire*, *ice storm*, *invisibility*, *levitate*, *detect magic*, *dispel magic*, *read magic*, *read languages*, *ESP*, *tongues*, *blink*, *hold person*, *shatter*, *gust of wind*, *push*, *detect invisibility*, and *bridge of fire*. This latter power is like a *wall of fire* except that it can span chasms, climb heights, etc., in the form of a blazing, flat path with neither side-rails nor supports reaching the ground below; only Duskur and creatures she is carrying can walk on it; all others will pass or fall through it. Once per day she can cast a *meteor swarm*, and once per day *reverse gravity*.

Duskur's kiss causes *sleep* if she wills it (no saving throw, but creatures immune to the spell *sleep*, and all greater devils, are unaffected), and thereby she gains most of her prey. She bears an venomous dagger similar to the weapon carried by erinyes devils (see the Monster Manual), and her skeletal bodyguards carry other weapons gained from victims. With each fist Duskur can strike for 2-8 points of damage. She regenerates 1 hit point per round.

Duskur appears as a winged but otherwise normal human female of thin, shapely form and graceful movements. Her flesh is snow-white, her eyes black pools — iris, pupils, and all a glistening black — and her hair long and black. Her wings are smoky-grey and white, leathery rather than feathered, and she usually wears a long, sweeping hooded cloak over them unless actually in flight. She is said to sometimes sing to herself in a beautiful fluting, high voice, but she bears no musical instrument or any love for the music of others.

KOCHBIEL (Greater Devil)

FREQUENCY: *Unique (Very rare)*

NO. APPEARING: 1

ARMOR CLASS: -3

MOVE: 6"/15"

HIT DICE: 104 *hit points*

% IN LAIR: 20%

TREASURE TYPE: *See below*

NO. OF ATTACKS: 4

DAMAGE/ATTACK: *By weapon type +8*

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: +2 *or better*
weapon to hit

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 65%

INTELLIGENCE: *Exceptional*

ALIGNMENT: *Lawful evil*

SIZE: L (14' tall)

PSIONIC ABILITY: 215

Attack/Defense Modes: *All/all*

Once a great general of the hells (marshal to the archdevil Beherit, now destroyed), Kochbiel was too feared and mistrusted by the other archdevils to win himself another place in the hierarchy. A cold and calculating general, his inspired tactics, iron leadership, and personal brawn made him the victor in many armed squabbles on Avernus and elsewhere in the hells, leading Beherit's legions. Although he never seemed to delight in defeating opponents — only in the lighting and strategy involved — many in the hells still bear grudges. Kochbiel takes care to avoid large groups or devils and all archdevils in his present exile, and is as elusive as his fellow exile Duskur (see above). Kochbiel is said to have explored (and enlarged upon) many subterranean chasms, caverns, and tunnel-warrens in Avernus, and is believed to spend much of his time moving about from one of these rough lairs to another. He is said to have gathered rich hoards of treasure in the most remote of these hideaways, and certainly much of what is known to have been brought to Avernus is presently unaccounted for. He and Nergal (see DRAGON issue #75) are rivals, and often find and raid each other's treasure hoards.

Kochbiel (pronounced *Kawkh - beel*) is very cunning and perceptive in matters of battle, ambush, and taking the measure of opponents. He is surprised only rarely (1 in 12 chance), and is always armed with at least four weapons taken from fallen foes. He can strike with all four of his arms in a round, at different targets if desired, and does 4-7 (1d4 +3) points of damage per fist if striking barehanded. He has 18/00 strength, regenerates 2 hit points per melee round, and can hold and constrict a single opponent for 2-8 points of damage per round if he scores a successful hit with his tail.

Kochbiel is able to employ any of the following spell-like powers at will, one at a time and once per round: *pyrotechnics*, *produce flame*, *wall of fire*, *detect magic*, *detect invisibility*, *polymorph self*, *hold person*, *invisibility*, *fireball* (3d6), *push*, *wall of force*, and *ice storm*. At will he can also shed *fear* in a 30' radius (save vs. spell to avoid). Once per day Kochbiel can cast *repulsion*, and thrice per day he can *dispel magic*. He cannot use a *symbol*, nor *summon* any devil.

Kochbiel resembles an especially large,

grey-skinned pit fiend with tall, curving, bull-like red horns. He has four massively muscled arms set in two opposing pairs — that is, a "front" pair plus a "back" pair facing the other way, two arms sharing a bony-plated, spike-horn-protected shoulder on each side of his body. Kochbiel can light four opponents on four sides at once with apparent ease. His eyes are a brilliant, flashing yellow, and his tongue and inner mouth a vivid purple.

MALAREA (Greater Devil)

FREQUENCY: *Unique (Very rare)*

NO. APPEARING: 1

ARMOR CLASS: -1

MOVE: 9"/24"

HIT DICE: 96 *hit points*

% IN LAIR: Nil

TREASURE TYPE: *See below*

NO. OF ATTACKS: 3

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-4/2-5/2-5 *or*
by weapon type +2

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: +2 *or better*
weapon to hit

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 70%

INTELLIGENCE: *High*

ALIGNMENT: *Lawful evil*

SIZE: L (7' tall, 28' wingspan)

PSIONIC ABILITY: 213

Attack/Defense Modes: *All/all*

Malarea (pronounced *Mahl-ah-ree -ah*) is a bitter and envious devil. She despises many of the consorts of the Nine Hells and desires (to the point of mania) to join their ranks. If she has to slay them all to claim her rightful place among them, she will do so unhesitatingly — but rude defeats on the occasions of her bold, direct assaults in the past have made her more cautious.

Malarea remains a fiercely combative, fractious devil, given to sudden berserk rages and wild physical attacks. This temperament probably cost her a consortship or other position in the hierarchy of the hells, and has certainly earned her her present exile. She has learned little, however: if she recognizes an archdevil, duke, or unique greater devil, she will pause to ascertain their situation and intentions before she attacks — but she almost always attacks eventually, except when faced with impossible odds. Lesser devils and intruders are her prey — she will attack any such creatures immediately, swooping at them to bite (1-4 damage) and strike with a lance, spear, or other weapon gained from a previous victim, or bare-handed with her iron-hard claws. Malarea is a strong flyer, and often buffets airborne opponents with her great wings, or rams into them at full speed (1-12 damage).

Malarea is able to use the following spell-like powers at will, one at a time and once per round: *pyrotechnics*, *produce flame*, *wall of fire*, *detect magic*, *dispel magic*, *detect invisibility*, *hold person*, and *polymorph self*. She can shed *fear* in a 2" radius

at will (save vs. spell to avoid), and can cast a *delayed blast fireball* (5d6) thrice per day. She regenerates 1 hit point every 2 rounds.

Malarea appears as a tall, human-like female with huge black wings, which tower 6 feet above her own head when furled; in short, rather like an erinyes (see the Monster Manual). Her eyes are fiery red, her hair long, greasy, and black, her body sleek but powerfully muscled and of a faintly luminescent, “ghostly” white hue. Her hands have long claws, and she has large, vampire-like fangs. Malarea speaks Mabrahoring (the language of the hells), her alignment tongue, and the common tongue. She is usually encountered wearing some gaudy trophy of a previous victim — a gleaming necklace or jeweled belt, but she cares nothing for the value of such items, and will carelessly discard one for another of gaudier appearance.

Malarea roams Avernus, avoiding the armies of Tiamat’s dukes and the Chromatic Dragon herself, but striking at all others she meets, seeking to slay and devour. If she encounters strong and determined opposition, it is quite likely that she will abruptly break off combat and wing away in search of other prey.

NISROCH (Greater Devil)

FREQUENCY: *Unique (Very rare)*

NO. APPEARING: 1

ARMOR CLASS: -1

MOVE: 14”/6”

HIT DICE: 99 *hit points*

% IN LAIR: Nil

TREASURE TYPE: Nil

NO. OF ATTACKS: 3

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 3-12/1-4/1-4

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: +2 *or better*
weapon to hit

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 65%

INTELLIGENCE: *Exceptional*

ALIGNMENT: *Lawful evil*

SIZE: L (11’ tall)

PSIONIC ABILITY: 217

Attack/Defense Modes: *All/all*

Nisroch, “The Eagle,” is the poisoner of the hells; he is polite, cruel, faintly mocking, and darkly humorous — and will try to slay any creature that thwarts his will. He destroyed the duke Senciner and nearly slew Abigor, another duke, and for this was banished. He now has little chance to practice his favorite art, poisoning sumptuous feasts, but instead contents himself with concocting deadly poisons from the sparse ingredients at hand in Avernus, and poisoning corpses and other food sources to surprise the unwary.

Nisroch can employ the following spell-like powers, one at a time and once per round: *pyrotechnics, produce flame, affect normal fires, continual light, read magic, detect magic, detect invisibility hold monster, create food & water, purify* (and *purify*) *food & drink, darkness 15’ radius,*

and *silence 15’ radius.* Once every 24 hours, Nisroch can create an *incendiary cloud* up to 6” distant. He can also *heal* himself (within 1 round) or another creature (by touch) once per day. At will, Nisroch can radiate *fear* in a 10’-radius sphere about himself (save vs. spell to avoid effects). Nisroch regenerates 1 hit point per melee round. (Note that he cannot employ a *symbol*, nor *summon* any other devil.)

Nisroch appears as an upright male humanoid with an eagle’s head, black feathers upon his head and chest, yellow eyes and talons, humanoid arms, and batlike wings protruding from his shoulders, separate from his arms. Where he is not feathered, Nisroch’s leathery, hairless skin is dusty black in hue. His elbows end in upswept, barbed spines; a slash from one of these, likely to be incurred only if the victim is grappling with Nisroch or attacking him from above, does 1-3 points of damage.

Nisroch’s unblinking stare rivets most who look upon him; he says little and observes much. He prefers to overcome opponents by subterfuge and poison rather than in open battle, but is not loath to fight non-devils, opponents, he deems weaker than himself, or any who attack him. In battle he uses his cruel, hooked beak (3-12 damage), his talons, and his spines (see above). His hands are not taloned and are not used in battle except to grapple with, snatch at, or disarm opponents; Nisroch avoids using weapons except in a pinch.

RUMJAL (Greater Devil)

FREQUENCY: *Unique (Very rare)*

NO. APPEARING: 1

ARMOR CLASS: -2

MOVE: 16”/16”

HIT DICE: 100 *hit points*

% IN LAIR: Nil

TREASURE TYPE: Nil

NO. OF ATTACKS: 2

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 2-8/2-8 (fists)

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: +2 *or better*
weapon to hit

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 65%

INTELLIGENCE: *Exceptional*

ALIGNMENT: *Lawful evil*

SIZE: L (8’ tall)

PSIONIC ABILITY: 209

Attack/Defense Modes: *All/all*

Expelled from the hierarchy of the hells for the molestation of Geryon’s consort Cozbi (see DRAGON issue #75), Rumjal is a proud and bitter exile, who delights in tormenting lemures, lesser devils, and non-diabolic visitors to Avernus. He is tolerated by Tiamat and her dukes far more than the other exiled devils, for he has in the past informed them of the schemes of both Nergal (see DRAGON issue #75) and several nycadaemons, and physically aided them in thwarting such plans. It is said that Asmodeus likes Rumjal, and does not wish him harmed or ill used.

Rumjal still considers himself lieutenant to Geryon (his former post) and a legitimate member of the hierarchy of the hells who has been temporarily displaced by a fall from favor. He acts accordingly, hoping that the loyalty and usefulness of his actions will restore him to his rightful place in the hierarchy (and he may be right). Rumjal, although a cruel prankster and an admirer of wit, art, and poetry, will let nothing sway him from the course of action that a loyal scion of the hells would take. He will never fawn or flatter when dealing with archdevils or other dukes, although he is always polite and generally good-natured; he deals with all other devils as equals. He often remarks that Asmodeus used to enjoy a good game of chess with him, and this is true.

Rumjal can employ the following spell-like powers at will, once per round and one at a time: *pyrotechnics, produce flame, light, read magic, read languages, detect invisibility, blink, and ring of fire.* This latter power produces a hollow circle of fire identical to a *wall of fire* in effects, except that Rumjal can throw it, roll it, and pick it up and swing it about; he is the only being able to do so. Once per day Rumjal can utter a *power word, blind.* His touch causes *fear* (save vs. spell at -2 to avoid). Rumjal regenerates 2 hit points per round. (Note that he cannot use a *symbol* nor *summon* another devil.)

Rumjal appears as a tall, muscular, hairless, slate-grey humanoid with a cruel, grinning human visage, dead-white curving horns, and bat wings. He has a prehensile tail of the same dead-white hue that splits at its end into three back-curving, barbed points, like a fishhook, with which he can flail (1-6 tearing damage) at opponents or constrict them (1 - 10 crushing damage per round). The barbs on his tail are envenomed with Rumjal’s caustic spittle, and upon each strike from a barb a victim must save vs. poison or take a further 2-8 points of corrosive, tissue-eating damage. This venom works only in open wounds; it reacts with a victim’s blood as it works, changing to become mere water. For obvious reasons, this liquid has not been analyzed or reproduced by alchemists. Rumjal produces it only in small quantities; in a pinch, he could spit it directly, but can only do so once in a 3-day period, and habitually uses it instead to keep his weapons well smeared.

Riches of the hells

Understandably, details of the treasures of the hells are largely unknown. Much is speculation, based on inference and fragmentary records. The following plane-by-plane summary is by no means complete., Note that, as a general rule, treasure in the hells is *not* lying around unguarded, and if it is taken, it will be actively pursued and recovered. Note that all consorts have fine clothing and jewelry (including diadems), and all archdevils have personal treasuries, not usually known about in detail.

Note also that many items of no intrinsic value (the skull of a devil, the normally used weapons of all devils, etc.) will have a high value to collectors if brought intact to the Prime Material Plane — rulers, sages, priests of rival gods, and such figures often like to possess and display such artifacts; these “treasures” are also not specifically mentioned herein. DMs should consider the possible alignment or physical-damage effects of wielding diabolic weapons or magic items. It should be noted that most forges and jeweler’s workshops on the planes of the Nine Hells are within the fortresses of archdevils, unless specifically mentioned as otherwise.

Avernus

The wastelands of Avernus have no easily accessible natural treasure, although deep-lying rocks (reached only by a few labyrinthine caverns and remote rifts) are said to contain some naturally occurring garnet, spinel, ruby, and sapphire. Many small hoards and caches (of varied treasure gained from intruders and from raids on Tiamat’s hoard) have been concealed in the many caverns of Avernus by Dagon, Kochbiel, and Nergal. Magic items and all types of currency are to be found among these — if they can be found at all, for all are difficult to locate (if they were not, they would have already been raided by other devils), and most are trapped with acid, balanced rocks (deadfalls), stake-lined pit traps, etc.

The largest single hoard on Avernus is certainly that of Tiamat, consisting of 100% of treasure types H, S, T, and U. She knows the size and components of her hoard intimately, will spot any thefts immediately, and has charged her consorts to guard her treasure at all times in her absence. Some abishai (see DRAGON issue #75 or Monster Manual II) encountered may bear treasure, and any erinyes encountered will have a *rope of entanglement* and a *dagger of venom*.

Individual devils also carry treasure of note, as follows:

Amduscias — All types possible, small amounts; carried only when in human form.

Goap — (J, R)
Malphas — 333 gems of base value 100 gp each, on robes.

Armaros — Spell components, fragments of spells and relevant notes written on vellum (in Mabrahoring, the language of the hells), magic items and knowledge of same.

Duskur — small amounts of all treasure types possible; gained from victims and carried by her skeleton bodyguards.

Malarea — Gaudy (appearance over material value) treasures worn as personal adornment; plunder from victims.

Dis

In the hills of the plane of Dis are a few, almost worked-out veins of nearly pure copper, and smaller amounts of the ores of

iron, tin, and zinc. These have been extensively worked by the devils, and the working are constantly labored in and guarded. In underwater crevices along the banks of the rivers of Dis, deposits of turquoise are found, but much of the mineral wealth of Dis has already been mined.

In the streets and underways (“pits”) of the Iron City of Dis there are undoubtedly items of treasure lost amidst the darkness, filth, and garbage. Large hoards, however, are found only in the palace of Dispatar and in the fortresses of his dukes.

Individual devils may own and perhaps be carrying treasure as follows:

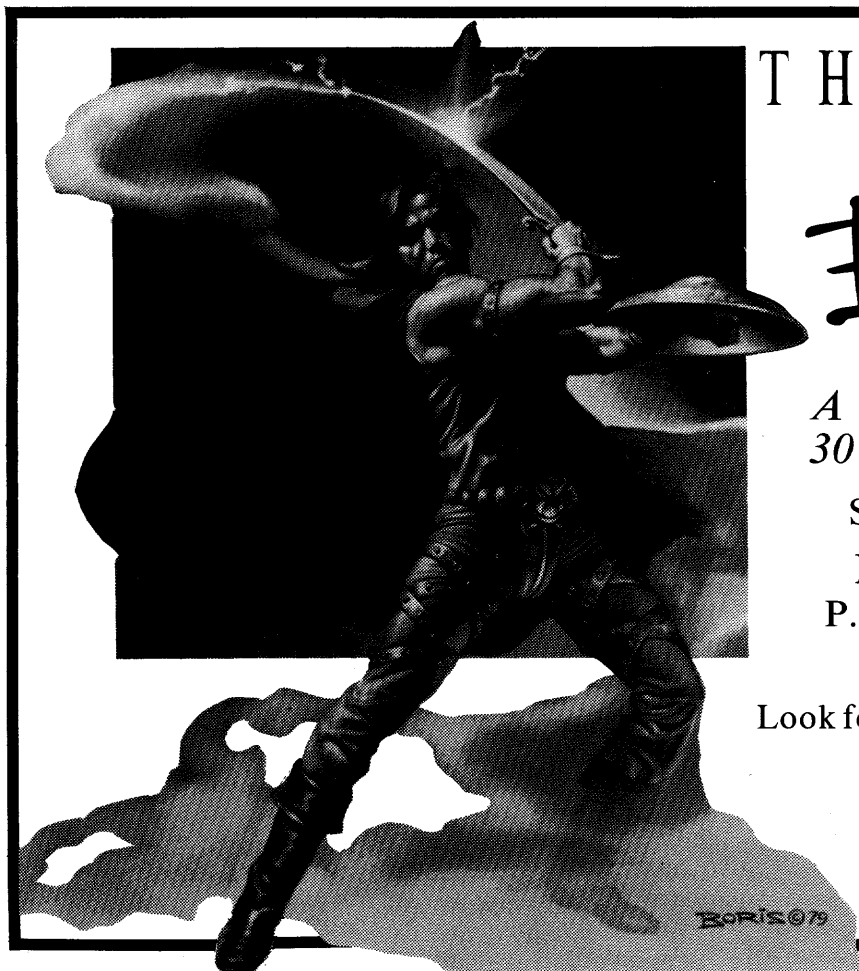
Dispatar — The lord of this plane has a sizable treasure (Qx10, S) of gold pieces, worked turquoise gems, spare *ropes of entanglement* and *daggers of venom* (see Monster Manual, “Erinyes,” for special venom effects), and his personal rod (see MM illustration of Dispatar for its appearance), which has the combined powers of a *rod of rulership* and a double-strength (4-24 damage) *staff of striking*.

Lilis — (Qx4, S)

Arioch — Dispatar’s bodyguard carries a 20’ - long double-ended +1 *halberd* of adamantite, and bears monetary treasure only upon the order of his superior.

Biffant — Dispatar’s provost carries an ornate iron rod of office (finely made; worth 20 gp for its workmanship alone), and controls a treasury amounting to (Qx8, S).

Alocer and Bitru — These dukes, who



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command companies of erinyes in Dispat-
ter's service, each have (G, P) plus a sizable
number of spare *ropes of entanglement* and
daggers of venom. Bitru also has his per-
sonal weapon, a +3 *two-handed sword*.

Titivilus — (G, S, T) plus a silver-bladed
sword of wounding; its hilt is adorned with
three rubies, each of 1700 gp value.

Baalzephon — personal treasure equal to
(J, R) hidden about Dispat's palace.

In addition, all of the dukes have small,
well-hidden hoards of treasure in their
fiefdoms, accumulated over centuries from
intruders and from mining efforts — the
little baubles they hoped Dispat would not
miss or begrudge them.

Minauros

Mammon, ruler of this plane, is known
as the "Lord of Avarice" for good reason:
he jealously guards all items of value in his
fortress (called "Galbuach," but more often
referred to as "Mammon's House" or not
named at all). His hoard is said to be great
(Hx20, Sx6, Ux2, Vx3 plus unknown addi-
tions), but Mammon never lets a single
piece of it outside of his vaults — the guard-
ing of which is the first of Focalor's duties.
Focalor himself commands a much smaller
treasure, the "palace purse" (F, I, Qx3),
which he is allowed to spend as he sees fit to
ensure the security and comfort of the for-
tress. Mammon's personal wealth, kept on
his person or in his apartments, is (H, R).
Mammon fights with a fauchard-fork that

does normal damage, but otherwise acts as
a *sword of wounding*. His consort Glasya is
known to have treasure equal to (I, Qx5,
S), and she carries a *dagger of venom*.

The marshy surface of Minauros itself
may well hold many small treasures fallen
from slain intruders, but all large, magical,
or noticeable items have been taken. Mam-
mon's dukes have no fortresses, but inhabit
bowl-like craters in the higher parts of the
volcanic ridges on this plane. Here they
hold their treasure, typically in chests, in a
pit covered by a massive boulder and con-
stantly guarded by a score or more of their
troops. These treasures are as follows:

Bael — (G, P), guarded by barbed devils.
He carries a bronze +2 *morning star* that
can change its length from 4 feet anywhere
up to 8 feet, as its wielder desires.

Caarcinolaas — (G, P), guarded by
barbed devils. He carries a +3 *scythe*.

Malchon — (G, P), guarded by two rings
of erinyes — one aloft and one on the
ground. Malchon has no magical weapons,
but all of his arms are poisoned.

Zimimar — (J, R)

Phlegethos

This active, fiery plane is rich in mineral
and gemstone wealth due to its volcanic
activity: all major metals are found here —
including the two metals unique to the hells,
arjale and *tantulhor*. Obsidian and dia-
monds abound in hardened lava-flows, and
rubies, sapphires, zircons, spinels, tourma-
lines, and lapis lazuli (lazurite) are recov-
ered in large quantities from the mines,
where spined devils labor ceaselessly under
the eyes of barbed devil overseers. The
outlands are well patrolled (by barbed dev-
ils, usually in squads of 12-16), for the
security of this plane is imperiled by the few
salamanders in hiding here (see issue #75,
p. 26), and beings of all sorts (including the
devils of other planes) wishing to make use
of its mineral wealth and splendid natural
forges, the fabled "firefalls." These cata-
racts of liquid fire are always guarded, with
many devils within call, and here (so say
magicians and sages) are made the best
flame tongue swords and the best *helms of
brilliance*. Belial makes much of the normal
weaponry used in the hells here, and is paid
well — in treasure, services, and favors.

In Abriymoch's lowest tiers, surrounded
by hell hound kennels, are Belial's vaults
containing monetary payments; his personal
wealth (A, S, T, Y) resides in his own
chambers high up on the rim of the vol-
cano. Individual devils bear or own treasure
as follows:

Belial — huge +4 *military fork*; if struck,
save vs. spell or be affected as though by a
symbol of pain.

Naome — (P, S, T) plus a large wardrobe
of rich silk and gold wire filigree garments,
with gem-studded belts and pins.

Chamo — (C, P, S) plus an iron-shod +1
staff that parts or negates all web, hold, and
other locking or binding spells or mecha-
nisms by touch, and can also detect good in
a creature (range 9") or item (by touch).

Balan — (C, P)

Bathym — (C, P) plus a black +3 *mace*
which dispels *light*, *continual light*, *faerie
fire*, or *dancing lights* automatically upon
contact with any part of the radiant area,
and a *dagger of venom*.

Gaziel — (P, S)

Zaebos — (J, R)

Zaebos — (J, R)

Stygia

Stygia is rich in natural wealth; its moun-
tains, steam trenches, and waters all yield
valuable substances. Opals and topazes are
dredged up from the bottom of the Styx
(through holes broken in the ice), and the
mountains around Tantlin yield granite,
basalt, marble, and even chalk, from great
quarries where much of the structural stone
used in the Nine Hells is hewn out of the
impassive rock. Rubies, beryls, and tur-
quoise deposits are found in the seams or
veins of these quarries, and in the "steam
trenches" or volcanic rift valleys high in the
outlands of the plane many metallic ores are
found in veins of igneous origin. Spined
devils labor ceaselessly in the quarries under
the direction of bone devil overseers, and
every known "steam trench" is home to
many malebranche.

The massive, labyrinthine halls of Tantlin
are crammed with the plunder of centuries,
items given to or seized by Geryon on many
planes. The exact composition and value of
his hoard are unknown, but in type it is
(Ux?, Vx?, Xx?), rather than coinage of
any sort; statues and temple idols of all
origins are common, as are pieces of furni-
ture, tapestries, unusual or gaudy orna-
ments, and the like. Geryon would merely
be bored with an exquisitely tiny ruby — he
has hundreds — but show him a ruby the
size of a man's head, and he is delighted.
DMs should detail his treasures accordingly.

Geryon himself carries treasure (H, R)
plus a magical bull's horn almost 4 feet in
length, bound about with bands of brass
and pins of nickel. It can be blown only
once in any 7-day period; when sounded it
calls forth 5-20 minotaurs, who will serve
the horn-blower until death. It is a relic of
Geryon's adventuring on other planes, and
is not of diabolic origin. Other individual
devils resident in Stygia may bear treasure
as follows:

Cozbi — +1 *spear*, up to 6 poisoned
knives, personal treasure (C, E) and jewelry
in Tantlin only.

Gorson — (A, G, P)

Herodias — (A, S, G, P)

Agares — (G, P), a +1 *staff* shod in iron,
and trained hawks (1 - 16 in number).

Amon — (G, P) plus a huge +3 *mace*.

Machalas — (G, P) and a +2 *axe*.

Fecor — (J, R)

Malbolge

Like Phlegethos and Stygia above it,
Malbolge is volcanically active, and its fire
pits and caverns yield rubies, sapphires,
and diamonds aplenty. Most of these valu-
ables find their way to Baalzebul's coffers

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via Moloch, Lilith, Tartach, Bileth, Bethage, and Herobaal — all of whom exact a few gems along the way for their own personal gain. They take care to keep most of these apart from their own hoards, and well hidden, until they can sell them unbeknownst to Baalzebul, exchanging them for less easily identifiable coinage. Most gems are to be found in the vaults of the fortresses of malebranche, with many concealed hoards — and raw, unmined gems — about the tortured surface of Malbolge.

Like Phlegethos, Malbolge is a source of the metals *arjale* and *tantulhor* (see the end of this section); Moloch's whip, said to be fashioned of an "unknown, pliable metal" (see *Monster Manual II*), is made of an alloy of *arjale*. These metals are much rarer in Malbolge than in Phlegethos, and are mined by nupperibos and spined devils under the command of malebranche, in a haphazard and untidy fashion. The status of a malebranche is in part measured by his yield of gems and metallic ores, so there is intense rivalry, trickery, and sometimes outright theft or battle between various malebranche in order that each may bring the largest yield to its commander.

It should be noted that personal treasures on Malbolge are portable, and often moved about, as Moloch and court move about in accordance with Baalzebul's wishes. Incidentally, Neabaz the herald (see the following section on Maladomini) is often the recipient of bribes on his visits when a

resident of Malbolge wants something not mentioned, or reported in a certain light or terms, to Baalzebul.

Individual devils on Malbolge may bear treasure as follows:

Moloch — (I, R, S, T, X) plus a 6-tailed whip which transmits his own natural electrical discharges (of great value for its metal, or to collectors).

Lilith — (C, I, S)

Tartach — (C, I, P), a *rope of entanglement*, plus a *sword +1, flame tongue* which is +2 vs. regenerating creatures, +3 vs. cold-using, inflammable, or avian creatures, and +4 vs. undead. Note that in the hells this blade does +2 damage to all devils, but +3 damage to all devils when wielded outside the hells.

Bileth — (C, P) plus a set of gilded coat-of-plate (material value 1200 gp).

Bethage — (J, R)

Herobaal — (J, R)

Maladomini

Maladomini is identical to Malbolge in terms of natural mineral wealth, with perhaps slightly more diamonds and obsidian to be found — but on Maladomini, almost all wealth finds its way to the great fortress of Malagard. Here is a vast, well-guarded (by malebranche) collection of gems (Qx300?) of all varieties, and a similarly protected collection of plants from all planes, tended by nupperibo under the command of a few bone devils, who are in

turn watched by the malebranche. In the vast, seemingly endless chambers and passages of Malagard are many riches of all sorts, from tapestries and furniture to marble and beaten copper wall inlays, but relatively few of these are "lost and forgotten" (more likely, they are surreptitiously hidden and hoarded by malebranche) in the disused, garbage-choked areas. Note that any attack upon, or pilferage from, Malagard will swiftly bring ever-increasing hordes of malebranche down upon the intruders' heads.

Individual devils resident on Maladomini may carry treasure as follows:

Baalzebul — (E, R, V)

Bafts — (D, G) plus a finely worked bronze spear (material value 4 gp).

Neabaz — May have some treasure due to bribes, or carried upon Baalzebul's business and explicit orders. He also holds a *sword +1, flame tongue* (see Tartach, above, for effects vs. devils) that when grasped can *know alignment* of any creature pointed at, and can fire 9 *magic missile* spells (1 missile per spell) per day. Neabaz wears a cape of blood-red silk which can at the wearer's will give forth a "cold version" *fire shield* up to 4 times per day, each aura lasting up to three rounds as desired; these flames will not harm the wings of Neabaz. Both the sword and cape are believed to be of Prime Material Plane origin.

Barbatus — Carries treasure only upon the orders and specific business of Baalze-

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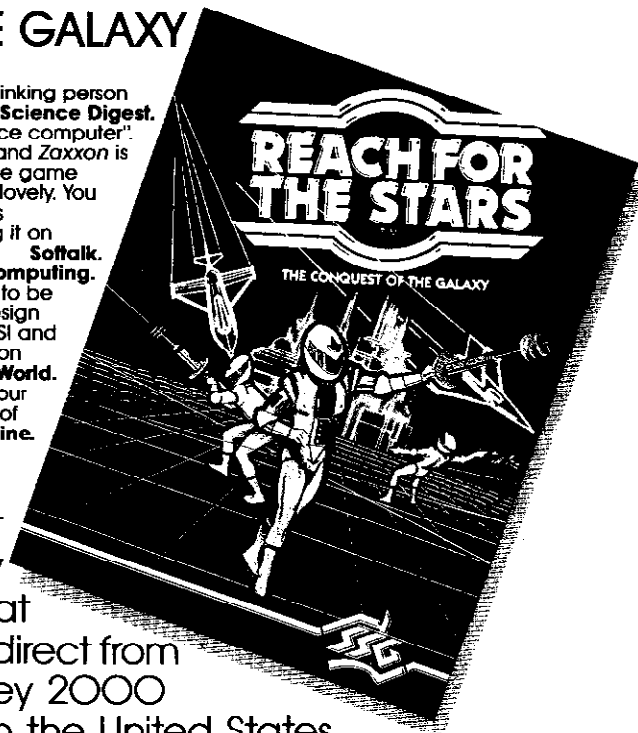
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bul, but when on the Prime Material Plane can *detect treasure* (of metal or mineral nature, as in a *wand of metal and mineral detection*) at a 3" range, and gains as much treasure as he can when there, which he gives to Baalzebul if seen with it, but otherwise hides in Malagard; the amounts and types thus hoarded are unknown.

Abigor — (A, I) plus a +2 *battleaxe*.

Zepar — (A, P), a hand axe and shortsword that are both envenomed (save vs. poison or faint for 1-6 melee rounds), and black-hued +1 *plate armor*.

Caina

Caina, the largely frigid realm of Mephistopheles, is rich in mineral wealth. Where hot magma meets the cold surface conditions (particularly in the "hot fringes" of the plane), it cools in metal-rich veins. Forges are located all about this region, under the administration of Nexroth. In the icy interior of Caina, magma cools and hardens at greater depths, forming what we know as "plutonic rocks": crystal-rich ores such as pegmatite, which harden in "dykes" and are the source of beryl, topaz, garnet, tourmaline, and many quartz gemstones. These are mined, at great peril, by nupperibos and ice devils who tunnel down through the unstable, shifting rifts of the great glaciers to reach deep rock exposed by glacial action. Rifts may open — or close — with sudden, crushing force, and mining tasks are — to say the least — not eagerly sought by the ice devils.

Mephistar, the iron citadel of Mephistopheles, contains the greatest treasure hoard on Caina (believed to be H, Xx10) under the guard of ice devils and spined devils commanded by Barbas. Nargus, the glacial palace of Bifrons, also has rich treasures — ice sculptures (non-portable, and rapidly destroyed when away from regions of biting cold) and gems (Qx14).

The nobles of Caina (two companies of pit fiends, including Silcharde, Bechard, Guland, Sphandor, Buldumech, Anxrab-bas, Ezegul, Ulfrin, and Seilazar) all have personal treasure equal to (J, R) each, but many may well have more, for their loyalty to Mephistopheles is minimal, and little tribute from the outer fringes reaches the Lord of No Mercy.

The hollows, caves, and glacial clefts of Caina are vast and remain little plundered for their mineral wealth, but Adonides, Steward of the Realm, keeps a careful eye on what creatures go where and what areas are disturbed. No intruders will mine in even the most remote areas of Caina for long before an ice devil, or a patrol of 1-4 ice devils, or even Adonides himself, with his guard of 16 ice devils, will appear.

Individual devils resident in Caina may bear treasure as follows:

Mephistopheles — (R, X, Z) plus a great 3-tined +3 *fork*. Upon the wielder's command, this weapon can deliver 3-12 points of cold, electrical, or fire damage as well as normal weapon damage. Each special attack form is usable 3 times per day; targets who save vs. spell will suffer only half damage.

Baalphegor — (R, X, Z)

Bele — Carries a *dagger of venom* and a black rod of office (equal to a *rod of smiting*), and also has personal *fools gold* natural power (as in the 2nd-level magic-user spell; 9 cubic feet affected, and saving throws of all creatures viewing the gold are at +9).

Adonides — (R, X, Z) plus a twisted, spiked +1 *staff*.

Barbas — (R, X, Z), a *staff of striking*, 3 *daggers of venom*, and a *chaotic good iron goad*. This last item is a rod with a hook at one end; it does 4-24 damage to all lawful evil creatures, including devils; other creatures suffer 1-6 (size L) or 2-8 (size S or M) points of damage.

Bifrons — (R, Qx6, Z) plus an envenomed scimitar (effects same as an erinyes' blade).

Hutijin — (G) plus a *net of snaring* and a +3 *trident*.

Nexroth — (J,R) . . . plus more, hidden away?

Nessus

The nethermost plane of the Nine Hells, variously known as Cocytus or Nessus, is the abode of the Overlord, Asmodeus, and the source of much of the wealth of the hells.

In the crags that lie all about the far reaches of the plane are to be found all gems and metals known on the Prime Material Plane, and in the central rifts, perhaps



aided by the unique conditions there (the "firewinds"), are to be found rich deposits of the two metals unique to the hells, as well as veins bearing the fiery red, strongly lawful evil gems unique to Nessus, the "hellstones."

Hellstones are the hardest gems known — many have survived hammer blows and weapon attacks unscathed. They are lit by an inner, flickering radiance, and do damage to all non-evil creatures (and half damage to non-lawful creatures of evil) upon the slightest contact, equal to 1-4 points +1 hit point per level or hit dice of the creature touched. The pit fiend Alastor is known to bear a double-bladed +4 *axe*, the head of which is studded with hellstones. The stones are rare, valuable (4000 gp each), but superstition-shrouded on the Prime Material Plane. Apart from the danger to most people of handling them (for they retain their damaging properties when removed from the hells) — even with tongs or gloves, the chance of an inadvertent contact is great — many priesthoods, classes (i.e., paladins), and individuals will not wish to possess or even be close to them, except to destroy them.

Sometimes, sages assert, contact with a hellstone does no damage, but causes a subtle change in alignment, not immediately noticed by the victim, one step closer toward lawful evil. A crushed hellstone — one that is shattered into many small fragments — will lose its radiance and capacity to cause damage. Due to their often lethal damaging properties, hellstones are often called "deathstones," "doomstones," or the like. Their "scholarly" name is Ulith, or the plural Ulithim.

The clear green waters of the river Lethe cause permanent *feeble-mindedness* (save vs. poison to avoid; devils are immune), and it is thus dangerous to capture and convey the liquid elsewhere; it is said to retain its power on other planes. Properties of the frozen waters of Lake Cocytus are unknown. The vast Burning Wood between the lake and the river Lethe (see DRAGON issue #76) yields ever-blazing branches (causing 1-4 points of flame damage upon a touch) with blue-green sap or ichor that is valued as a potion and spell-ink ingredient,

and as an unguent or ingredient used in the making of many magic items.

Such natural substances of Nessus may well bring high prices (15,000 gp and up) per item or container if sold to alchemists, sages, and magic-users on the Prime Material Plane. It should be noted that aerial patrols of pit fiends watch the rifts, crags, and woods of Nessus closely, and the mighty personal armies of Asmodeus are always encamped in a ring about the Overlord's palace.

The palace is vast and beautiful, crammed with all sorts of exquisite creatures and objects, many of which are highly valued on the Prime Material Plane and elsewhere. Details of the palace and its treasures are not known to non-devils, although it is commonly thought in the hells that Asmodeus holds in his palace more riches than are in the clutches of devils in all the rest of the Nine Hells put together. Even his pit fiend guards have (J, R) personal treasure.

Individual devils are, however, known to possess — and may bear some or all of — the following:

Asmodeus — (I, R, U, V) plus his glowing rod of pure ruby (1,000,000 gp material value) with opaline tip that can cause *serious wounds* upon touch. It also acts as a *rod of absorption*, and upon command will shoot a cone of frost, jet of acid, or bolt of lightning (equal in range and effects to these attacks as often as 9 times per 13 turns, 1 attack per round. If desired by the wielder, the rod can fire one particular attack in 9 successive rounds, or strike continuously, using all three attack forms interchangeably, for 27 successive rounds. No audible command word is required to fire these attacks, and Asmodeus can mentally override the commands of any non-archdevil who grasps the rod unless he himself is slain, on another plane, unconscious, or engaged in psionic combat. The rod will shift the alignment of any possessor gradually but inexorably to lawful evil, more rapidly the more often the rod is used.

Bensozia — (C, R, X) plus a brass scepter (4-16 damage per contact to all creatures of good alignment, 3-12 to devils, 2-8 to

others) and a diadem of beaten gold set in rubies (total value 26,000 gp).

Adramalech — (I, S, Z) plus a +2 *staff* that can *slay living* (save at +1 to avoid) by touch, and *disintegrate* (devils save at +1) by touch. Each power is usable at the wielder's will, but only once in every six turns, and only one power is usable within any round. (Note that all greater devils and archdevils are immune to the staffs powers.) He also may carry a tome known as the "Book of Fire" or the "Infernal Records" — composed of many folios and papers recording almost all diabolic truenames, known powers, actions, likes, dislikes, treasure, activities, means of summoning, and so forth.

Phongor — (Qx2, Z) plus many instruments of torture, and a cat-of-nine-tails of 9 wire strands, which does 1-4 damage plus venom effects (see erinyes entry in Monster Manual for details).

Buer — (H, Qx4) plus a +2 *mace* and a +1 *bow* (with 20 arrows).

Bune — (I, Qx10, W, Z)

Morax — (H, I, Y)

Rimmon — (Qx6, R)

Zagum — (C, P)

Baalberith — (W)

Alastor — (I, V) plus his double-bladed +4 *battleaxe* studded with 16 hellstones.

Martinet — (J, R)

Unique metals and talismans

The two metals unique to the hells are found in Phlegethos, Malbolge, Maladomini, and Nessus.

One of them is *arjale*. It is black in color, light in weight, easily worked to a smooth surface, and can be brought to razor-sharpness. If alloyed with iron, it becomes a light green-grey in color, and quite pliable (a metal sometimes called "dajavva").

The other is *tantulhor* (no relation to what we know as "tantalum"). It is about the weight of iron, can be worked into a smooth finish, and is apparently unbreakable — weapon blades fashioned of it will cut anything they touch, except stone.

Methods of forging and working these metals are unknown outside the hells — as,

by and large, are the metals themselves. Due to their rarity and properties, such metals will bring very high prices if shrewdly sold on the Prime Material Plane.

The rod of Dispaten is known to be made of tantulhor, and Moloch's whip is of dajava. The talismans of many devils — Agares, Asmodeus, Barbatos, and Buer, for certain — are known to be fashioned of arjale, and most others are suspected to be of tantulhor (so far, Zagan's talisman and the talisman for all barbed devils have been specifically identified as of tantulhor; note that both of these talismans have a number of barbs that will cut anything but stone).

The compositions of a few other talismans are known: the talisman for all bone devils is a hook of bone (origin unknown); the talisman for all malebranche is of obsidian; and the talismans of Belial, Morax, and Zepar are of polished brass.

The devils' dark agents

Here follows a very brief summary of those creatures who actively further diabolic causes on the Prime Material Plane(s). These are of two types: agents (who obey, and spend much of their time working for, the devils), and allies (who will and do cooperate with devils to further common causes or in return for sufficient reward).

The most important diabolic agents on the Prime Material Plane are the dominant race of the plane — humans. Both individual humans (particularly lawful evil magic-users who can summon devils from the Lower Planes to the Prime Material) and devil-worshipping groups (such as lawful evil priesthoods of the diabolic) exist, and they are the backbone of diabolic influence on the Prime Material. They deal either directly with devils or through intermediaries such as dark nagas, hell cats, imps, and the like. Such intermediaries can command nightmares, mephits, and so on for their own use.

These intermediaries can also deal with equivalent races in cold regions (frost men), swampy areas (some tribes of muckdwellers), and in the sea (sahaguin, and the few lawful evil sirine). Other types of creatures also dealt with by the intermediaries are dragons (the green and blue varieties; lawful evil dragonkind, who will obey Tiamat directly, or orders attributed to Tiamat brought by a devil or known intermediary creature) and the subterranean races (meenlocks and mites), who are sometimes ruled through another rank of intermediaries, such as medusae.

In turn, all of these human-and-equivalent races command more stupid creatures (both lawful evil creatures such as manticores, and those of neutral alignments) which they can force, goad, or train into service. Humans of sufficient talents can create undead (skeletons and zombies) to serve them, and such creatures as scarecrows and homunculi. The truly loyal diabolic servants are few in number, but rely in

most situations upon the allies they can call upon for fighting strength and weight of numbers.

Such allies include beholders (and in the sea, eyes of the deep); the goblin races (goblins, orcs, hobgoblins) and kobolds; some tribes of muckdwellers; some wererats (and in turn, normal rats); some fire giant bands; some ogre magi, annis, and greenhags; some intelligent undead (such as wraiths, spectres, mummies, wights, penanggalans, ghosts, and poltergeists); a few liches and adherers; some duergar settlements; some men (mercenaries, LE non-diabolic priesthoods, and their worshippers); and screaming devilkin. They in turn have servant creatures and allies they can call upon: "The arm of Asmodeus is long," as the saying goes, "longer than you think."

Some lawful evil creatures are so self-interested that they rarely, if ever, cooperate with the devils' dark agents. These include the aboleths, the (lawful evil) githyanki, and the illithids (mind flayers).

Details and precise dispositions of diabolic agents will vary from Prime Material Plane to ("parallel"/alternate) plane — that is, from campaign to campaign. But there should be one constant — the enigmatic, "watchdog" devil Gargoth:

GARGOTH (Arch-devil)

FREQUENCY: *Unique (Very rare)*

NO. APPEARING: 1

ARMOR CLASS: -6

MOVE: 16"/20"

HIT DICE: 177 *hit points*

% IN LAIR: Nil

TREASURE TYPE: *See below*

NO. OF ATTACKS: 2

DAMAGE/ATTACK: *By weapon type +7*

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 90%

INTELLIGENCE: *Supra-genius*

ALIGNMENT: *Lawful evil*

SIZE: L (8' tall)

PSIONIC ABILITY: 311

Attack/Defense Modes: *All/all*

Gargoth, "The Lord Who Watches" (sometimes misnamed by sages as "Ashtaroth"; a name properly applied to a demon prince of great-power), was once a mighty power in the hells, second only to Asmodeus himself. For untold eons, however, he has resided elsewhere — most believe on the Prime Material Plane — and has become little more than a legend both in the hells and on the Prime Material Plane. He is real, however, and very powerful. The reason for the departure of Gargoth from the hells is unknown. Some sages say he challenged Asmodeus and was driven into exile; others say that he left upon the destruction of his closest friend, Beherit, at the hands of Asmodeus (see the following section, "Of the nature of devils"). One or both of these reasons may be true.

It is certain that Gargoth is a loner; his



few servants are undead and other creatures he can control with his *charm monster* ability (he favors snakes and blue dragons). He cannot *summon* any devil, and never openly works with the devils or their agents. He dislikes revealing himself, preferring to work behind the scenes or in disguise. Of all the devils, he has the strongest sense of humor, and possesses a wily intelligence and acting ability that rival those of Asmodeus himself.

The activities and aims of Gargoth on the Prime Material Plane are similar to those of the devils and their agents — not surprising, considering his alignment and upbringing, but some devils (notably Mephistopheles and Adramalech) believe that Gargoth and Asmodeus are staunch allies, as friendly together as devils ever get, and that Gargoth works to further their common ends from concealment outside the hells, serving in part as a "watchdog" on the activities and loyalties of "official" servants of the hells, and the devils themselves, on the Prime Material Plane. Certainly he has never supported another archdevil in any bid to unseat Asmodeus — although he is continually sought after for that end by the ambitious dukes, due to his great personal power — and when a devil meets with Gargoth, Asmodeus eventually knows what has befallen.

Gargoth can employ the following spell-like powers at will, one at a time and once per round: *pyrotechnics*, *produce flame*, *wall of fire*, *fireball* (4d6), *ice storm*, *dispel magic*, *detect lie*, *detect magic*, *detect invis-*

ibility, ESP, beguile, geas, know alignment, read magic, read languages, tongues, identify, shapechange, charm monster, raise dead, and (fulfill another's) limited wish. His gaze causes confusion (as in the spell), his breath causes fear (a cone 2" long and 1" wide at its farthest extent, usable once every 2 rounds), and at will he can surround himself with a nimbus of choking, caustic, sulphurous fire (save vs. breath weapon or lose consciousness for 1-6 rounds) affecting all creatures within a 10' radius. It causes 1-6 points of fiery damage (save for half damage), and will ignite paper, clothing, and other combustibles.

Once per day Gargoth can use a *symbol of insanity* or of *pain* (one or the other, not one of each), and once per day he can *transmute metal into gold*. Using this latter power, he can change any refined metal except silver (i.e., any implement, crude forging, weapon, etc., but not raw ore) by touch into gold (no volume limit, but the weight of the metal to be changed cannot be more than 600 gp). This takes 1 round, and other substances touching, or attached to, the metal(s) to be turned are entirely unaffected. The gold produced is very pure — and thus soft and crumbly — but will conform to the shape and disposition of the metal it replaces exactly. Thus a hook holding a heavy cauldron, if turned to gold (Gargoth can so control his power that he could choose to change only the hook, and not the attached chains and cauldron, if he

so wishes — or change all three, even if they are all made of different metals) would break off, twist, and crumble away immediately, dropping the cauldron to earth. Broken items will be transmuted into broken gold items, not whole items. If any magic item is transmuted, the transformation "drinks" the magical charge, leaving the item bereft of all dweomer. Gargoth's power of transmutation can only be successfully used when he is in full control of his senses (i.e., a psionically or magically controlled Gargoth could not turn baser metals into gold).

Gargoth can breathe in water, and take in gases poisonous to men without apparent effect, and is immune to *charm*, *sleep*, and *hold* spells of any type. Poisons (including venom) do not seem to affect him, but silver weapons are known to do him double damage. Mere contact with silver does him 1-3 points of damage. (A bag of silver pieces hurled at Gargoth once nearly slew him.) He regenerates 2 hit points per round.

Gargoth has no known lair (it is likely that he has many, and is often on the move, concealed by his illusions — see the Monster Manual for spell-like powers common to all devils). Gargoth can strike with his naked fists for 2-8 damage each in a round, or employ any weapon except one made of, or adorned with, silver. He will seek to destroy, bury, or drown silver objects so they can never be used against him.

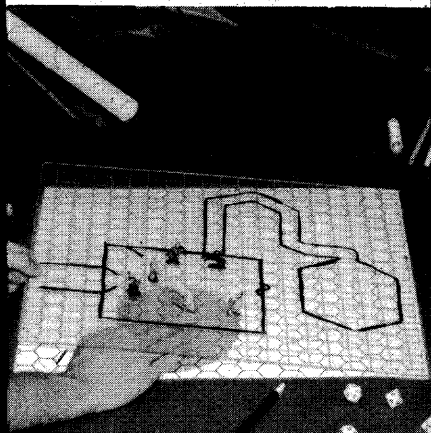
Gargoth cannot be *summoned* by any devil

or conjurer, although he can be compelled to service by the same spells that affect other devils if he is encountered.

Sages say that Gargoth possesses an ability unique among devils (an ability that causes some to argue that he is not a devil at all): he can *plane shift* once every 9 days, apparently freely about the known planes of existence, for he has been seen far from the Prime Material Plane.

Gargoth usually appears as a handsome, 8'-tall man of indeterminate mature age, with noble features, a soft, low voice, and a mustache. He wears swash-topped boots, jerkins with slit and puffed sleeves, velvet-lined cloaks and similar finery, and usually carries treasure equal to Qx4 in the form of huge, sparkling knuckle rings, pendants, buckle ornaments, and cloak pins. In his voluminous sleeves, and slipped down his boots, Gargoth usually carries 4-6 throwing knives, and he can juggle these with a showman's skill and flair if he wishes. Sometimes he adopts the guise of a nondescript trader or an old pilgrim, but only rarely appears as a female creature. He has more self-control, and thinks in a more strategic fashion, than any other devil — his sense of humor tempers his thinking and reactions in situations where even Asmodeus would fly into a rage. He is an awesome foe, and if he preferred to rule the hells rather than walk his own path, the present Overlord's days might well be numbered. Gargoth sees himself as more powerful, and far more intelligent — cer-

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tainly less rash — than the present hierarchy of hell, and therefore above them in rank, and free to choose his own role and way — he is lawful evil, but he is himself the lawmaker. He is on friendly terms with Asmodeus, whom he sees as the most capable of the archdevils — and is known to respect also Alastor, Bifrons, and Mephistopheles. He views only Asmodeus and Alastor as anything approaching equals, and sees Mephistopheles as a young, rash, inexperienced replica of himself. DMs please note: Gargoth will reveal nothing of his personal thoughts on such things, to anyone, under any circumstances. He will always speak with detachment, dispassionately and reflectively, and often pretends to beliefs and emotions to mislead and manipulate his audience of the moment.

He is so skillful at this that he can elicit obedience from even the vainest of creatures, such as the (lawful evil, green or blue) dragon. Gargoth customarily employs a large, adult or older blue dragon as his steed (one, named Rathguul, he has grown very fond of, and often engages in riddle-games with), and often bears a giant poisonous snake (such as a pit viper) wrapped about his arm (see the Monster Manual for effects of the snake's poisonous bite). Gargoth has been known to cast this snake at nearby foes, or atop sleeping or preoccupied men or orcs, for his own amusement.

Of the nature of devils

To understand the hierarchy of the hells and how it works — and to know how properly to deal with and defeat the diabolic — it is necessary to know something of the nature and biology of devils. Unfortunately, this is a subject rife with mystery, misunderstanding, and wild, often false speculation as far as most Prime Material Plane observers are concerned — and it must largely remain so. What little is known of the nature of devils follows hereafter.

All lesser and non-unique greater devils derive their physical forms and powers from the archdevils. These mighty lawful evil beings alone possess the power to transform or “shape” devilkin, a somewhat mysterious process whereby an archdevil by an act of concerted will and direct physical and mental contact with a lawful evil spirit, lemure, larva, or devil can permanently *shapechange* that being into an undead or lawful evil creature of any sort (including diabolic form).

The Overlord has the means (see below) to enforce his own limitations on the use of this power; by such tradition, for example, only he creates pit fiends. And although any archdevil has the time and potential “raw material” (lemures, stench kine, hell hounds and the like) to create legions of devils, they are rarely allowed to do so.

Lawful evil souls and spirits come to Avernus via the Astral Plane, and wander freely through the hells, until noticed and mentally “bound” (*charmed*) by an arch-

devil. Any number can be bound (and are controlled as a cleric controls animated undead) until needed for shaping. The shaping process takes 1 round per hit die of the form being created, and must be commenced with a particular end result in mind (and once begun, followed through to that result — i.e., the shaper cannot change his mind about what is desired in the midst of the process, although an unsatisfactory result can be reshaped anew). An archdevil can do nothing else while shaping (for it commands all his attention) and is thus vulnerable during this time.

Advances in the personal power of a diabolic spirit cause it to be rewarded with a more powerful form and a more influential position, and eventually such a spirit with continued growth would rise into the ranks of the greater devils, becoming in turn a styx devil, malebranche, ice devil, and pit fiend.

The essential difference between lesser and greater devils is that the spirits of the latter are of sufficient power (lawful evil loyalty, mental/psionic development, self-will and self-control) to take a distinctive name. By doing so, such spirits protect themselves from the caprices of archdevils, for the very name of a named spirit determines its form, and so a given spirit cannot be ousted from its form, nor shaped into another diabolic form without its cooperation (although an archdevil of sufficient strength can always give another devil the choice of cooperation or utter destruction). Thus, an ice devil is always an ice devil; an archdevil can give it a replacement form of an ice devil or even a lesser creature if its own form is lost, but cannot demote it in form without its cooperation.

Greater devils always derive their own new name when they have developed sufficiently; then they seek out an archdevil to grant them such a higher form (typically pledging limited loyalty to the archdevil in return for the bestowal of a new form). To advance beyond the status of a pit fiend requires an anima (soul or spirit) of unusual lawful evil strength and finely honed powers — powers that apparently are served best, and serve the hells best, when matched with a unique personal form; therefore, much of the hierarchy of the hells consists of devils of unique forms and powers, despite the strict regimentation of lower ranks.

The most intelligent devils, and the most loyal to Asmodeus, are the consorts; the Overlord allows only certain loyal spirits to take this form, thereby limiting possible treachery, and protects the consorts from unwanted attentions of other devils and diabolic creatures — on pain of destruction or exile (see the description of Rumjal above). The consorts can see and appreciate the strategy of Asmodeus, and consider him a fair and astute Overlord, much better at ruling the hells than any of the other archdevils would be, except perhaps Mephistopheles. Glasya, daughter of Asmodeus and one of the most influential consorts, does not always see eye to eye with her

father, but thinks and acts in a like manner to him, and thus supports him continually.

However, none of the consorts can afford to be complacent. In comparison to their male counterparts and underlings such as pit fiends, they are relatively weak in physical and magical powers. Their survival depends upon continued usefulness to, and being in the good graces of, Asmodeus and their respective archdevil mates. Among the ranks of the “outcast” unique devils are several she-devils who could readily be elevated to the position of consort, to replace an unwanted or destroyed incumbent. These include Duskur and Malarea, described above. At least one consort, Batna (and her mate the archdevil Beherit, the former ruler of Malbolge), has been utterly destroyed by Asmodeus for disobeying his restrictions upon the elevation of devils.

Asmodeus alone has the power and knowledge to alter the truename of a lawful evil creature; it is largely this power that enabled him to become master of the hells, and that leads some to consider him a deity. It is also this ability that enables him to exile devils, by ending their ability to answer a *summons*.

Asmodeus carefully maintains his rule over the Nine Hells, and as carefully nurtures the strength of his domain, keeping it close-knit and individually strong by limiting its hierarchy, holding the pit fiends loyal to (and beholding to) him personally by threat of destruction or exile and by promise of elevation to the hierarchy as a reward. Such advancement is rare, coming only when a vacancy is created in the hierarchy by the utter destruction or exile of an archdevil or a unique greater devil (most of whom are dukes).

Exile of a rebellious devil involves the taking of a new name and form; the former unknown to the Prime Material Plane summoners, and the latter having diabolic censure and comparatively feeble powers — all resulting in practical imprisonment on the plane of exile. The outcasts of the hells have been exiled to Avernus, and collectively are known as the “rabble of devilkin,” although many remain quite powerful. Note that a rebellious styx, horned, or ice devil, or pit fiend must be elevated to unique form to be exiled; more often, such are merely destroyed.

The body of a devil slain on a plane other than one of the Nine Hells will slowly begin to burn, regardless of temperature, oxygen, or surroundings, giving off first thick, oily smoke, then a rising, crackling burst of orange and sickly yellow through green-hued flame, which gives off little heat but consumes the carcass in a puff of smoke and shower of sparks (within a ten-foot radius), leaving nothing but a sulphurous, brimstone stench. Combustion begins 6 rounds after death, and is complete at the end of 9 rounds after the devil (or at least its physical form) is slain.

A *speak with dead* spell cast upon a devil outside of the Nine Hells will have no effect. If cast upon the corpse of any slain devil

while in the hells (diabolic bodies do not spontaneously combust in the hells, but rather lie to rot, usually being eaten before long), *Speak with dead* will bring the spellcaster into direct communication with the archdevil who rules the plane (and if that archdevil has itself been slain, into communication with Asmodeus himself). This occurs regardless of the archdevil's location and activities at the time; the archdevil will hear all questions (and any other words uttered by the spellcaster while the spell is in effect — it retains normal duration), and may — it is not compelled to — answer, or speak something else, which may be a message, threat, or order, but not a spell, in reply.

All unique greater devils (including archdevils) who suffer destruction of their form on a plane other than their own will flee the place and plane of their slaying as disembodied spirits, travelling astrally back to their home plane. There they can seize control of any lemure, casting out the spirit therein, and make the form their own. Greater devils endure nine decades of torment in lemure form before being granted their old form back. Archdevils can slowly shift forms back to their own form, but it takes a decade before an archdevil can regain the ability to leave its own plane at will.

Traveling the Styx

Recently information has come to light (Monster Manual II, p. 28, *Daemon (Charon)*) that the river Styx spans the Lower Planes, with branches flowing through the topmost layers of Pandemonium, the Abyss, Tarterus, Hades, Gehenna, and Acheron, and culminating in an ocean on Stygia, the fifth plane of the Nine Hells. The river Lethe in Nessus, nethermost of the Nine Hells, may well be one of its branches, but the waters of Lethe have slightly different effects (see DRAGON issue #76, p. 32) than those of the Styx.

Note that although the Styx appears as a deep, swift, unfordable torrent, the river never seems to "go anywhere"; its source(s) have never been found, and although its waters rush in one direction or another (remaining consistent only while within a given plane), it never empties nor floods its banks. Although an observer journeying to Stygia on it will find that it falls from the mountains, flowing ever slower, to end in a swamp and apparently boundless ocean, Charon or a charonadaemon will take its skiff somehow through the swamp and pass on to another plane without having to climb back out of Stygia's encircling mountains. In similarly confusing fashion, a boat on the Styx may pass on from plane to plane in an apparently random fashion, coming upon Acheron, Pandemonium, and the rest in any order — one knowing the Styx's branches well could pass from any of the Lower Planes (topmost layers only, except for Stygia) to any other of the topmost



Lower Planes. This may not be so, for only Charon and the charonadaemons know the Styx well. It is certain that the branches of the Styx enter the Astral, Ethereal, and Prime Material Planes, and that Charon and his charonadaemons, in their skiffs, can travel them freely, regardless of current or plane traveled into or across.

Note that Charon and the charonadaemons are immune to the effects of the waters of the Styx (or of the Lethe, if doused with them), and if attacked by a passenger, or if a passenger seeks to steal its goods — including stealing back the fare paid — the daemonic boatmaster will typically capsize its craft deliberately, towing it away — for Charon and his charonadaemons are strong swimmers (18" move) and can at will exercise *water breathing* and *water walking* (18" move) and care nothing for breaking bargains that someone on the other end of has already violated — recovering its treasure, righting its skiff, driving off its former passengers, and sailing on. Passengers could thus find themselves stranded. Should they later raise treasure or the means to make a suitable sacrifice (see *Monster Manual II*, p.29), and then summon Charon or a charonadaemon again, however, they begin with a clean slate; Charon and his servants hold no grudges as long as the fare is paid, and will take aboard beings they have fought previously.

Charon and the devils largely ignore each other. Charon and the charonadaemons will never speak to or attack a devil, and only archdevils or greater devils would ever approach or attack such a creature, or the passengers in its skiff. In such a case, Charon or a charonadaemon would seek to defend itself (*not* its passengers) and *plane shift* via the Styx to another plane immediately. The skiffs of such daemons do not seem affected by fire- or cold-based (and most other spell) attacks.

As far as the hells are concerned, this means that the easiest road to the hells is via the Styx, for if it can be found on the Prime Material Plane and the fee paid, an admittedly perilous route to the hells is opened. The Styx passes eventually into Avernus, and thence to Stygia, before passing on to other planes. No devil except a greater devil or archdevil will touch the boatmaster or any passenger until they leave the skiff, in either Avernus or Stygia — although lesser devils often find and travel with such a skiff, waiting for the passengers to alight. Any greater devil or archdevil attacking passengers — which they will do usually only when the passengers are fleeing with treasure belonging to the archdevil or greater devil (or the greater devil's archdevil master) — will ignore Charon or the charonadaemon, who will in turn ignore the devils, poling steadily onward, although behind him his passengers may be slain or torn from the skiff. Such attacks rarely damage or upset the skiff — if they do, Charon or the charonadaemon *will* strike back.

Anyone summoning a skiff to escape from the hells will find that the boatmaster

will not tight for them nor carry anything aboard — except its fee — but will not waste time or attract undue attention, either. Lesser devils will rarely attack beings dealing with, or in the presence of, Charon or a charonadaemon, except from a distance (i.e., by the use of missiles or spells). Neither Charon nor a charonadaemon will take a passenger "on credit" or upon the promise of being paid at the destination — if you lack the fee up front, you will not be allowed aboard. Note that charonadaemons will not take most devils aboard — for only the styx devils (see the FIEND FOLIO® Tome) can pass out of the Lower Planes by using the plane-spanning powers of the Styx or of such a skiff, hence their name.

The boatmasters of the Styx will readily take non-diabolic lawful evil creatures if the fee is paid, including achaerai, barghests, daemons, hell cats, hell hounds, hordlings, mephits, and rakshasas. Note that the boatmaster will not police its passengers; if they fight among themselves, it is not its affair, unless they attack it or its boat, and a party of human adventurers could well find themselves sitting with a pair of styx devils — or fighting them savagely in a small, precarious, open boat!

Mounts, including nightmares, are difficult to transport. They must be blindfolded and made to lie down, and for the inconvenience and the space required Charon and his charonadaemons will charge triple fare for such creatures, in addition to the fee for their rider (or owner, if a pack animal). If a boat has insufficient spaces left when summoned, the party must let it go and summon another, or split up; no boatmaster will evict a passenger who has not yet reached his or her destination to make room for another. If they did this, almost no one would seek passage with them, and so this is an inflexible rule: even if a charonadaemon intends to later betray a passenger by delivering him to the wrong place or by leading him into an ambush, it will never force any passenger out unless that passenger attacks it. If a charonadaemon docks at a place known by its passengers to be wrong, and they refuse to get out of the boat, it will not attack them (unless they attack it), but rather wait for a time, and if the passengers also wait patiently, will move on to the proper place (if they seem too strong to overcome) or to another wrong destination or ambush (if the passengers seem weak). A boatmaster will never attack first. Note that Charon himself will *never* betray passengers by leading them into ambush or to a wrong destination.

Mention should be made of another route into the hells: Pazuzu (see *Monster Manual II*, p. 41) will carry a summoner (a servant or a being he hopes to gain as a servant in this way) to the hells in return for a service to be performed in the hells, or later — usually, as he is also called to bring the being back out of the hells, it costs two services! (A less expensive way to venture alone to the hells may be to take Pazuzu in, and Charon or a charonadaemon out again.

Travelers are advised to avoid the busy season.)

Note to the DM

In conclusion, a much-needed reminder to *Dungeon Masters* handling devils in play: devils are too often misused. The legions of the hells may seem small in numbers when compared to the goblin races, men, and demons, but they are both mighty and numerous when compared to a party of adventurers — or even an army of invaders. Player characters entering the hells will have to wade through almost all of an archdevil's legions (thousands of strong, organized devils, enthusiastic and/or fanatical and/or afraid of punishment if they perform poorly, and fighting on their "home ground") before even seeing the archdevil (unless the party has that archdevil's talisman). Greater devils send lesser devils to do their bidding, and call on aid from higher ranks only if hard pressed. No player should ever be able to boast of his or her character slaying Asmodeus in his very throneroom in Nessus, or for that matter, outsmarting any archdevil!

The distressingly widespread tendency to mishandle devils and other powerful monsters so that players can overcome them too easily cheapens any AD&D® campaign, and ultimately the interest and pride of player-character achievements therein. Bear in mind also that no PC or NPC, however learned, will ever know fully and accurately the powers of devils and the details of the Nine Hells as presented in "The Nine Hells" (*DRAGON* issues #75 and #76) and herein: all available diabolic information should be scanty, distorted, and often wildly inaccurate. Seekers after such knowledge may well attract the attention of diabolic agents (see above), too.

Note also that treasure taken from the hells will be actively sought by devils and their agents (both to bring about its recovery, and the destruction of those who took it), and that gems in their natural state found in the hells do not resemble cut, polished gems; extensive knowledge (lapidary secondary skill, or the knowledge of a dwarven miner) may be required even to recognize them.

Research into the diabolic continues — and probably never will be complete. Perhaps there are some things men were not meant to know, and certainly many will die trying to learn more — for what is still mysterious lies in the innermost nature and workings of the Nine Hells, and the sane and wise do not inquire too closely of such matters. Wherefore, this treatise is at an

END

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Eight devilish questions

... with answers that Titivilus wouldn't give

by Ed Greenwood

Since the publication of "The Nine Hells" in issues #75 and #76 of DRAGON® Magazine, many readers have asked specific, thoughtful questions about the devils and their infernal realms. I thank you all for your enthusiasm and interest, and I've tried to answer all queries, either in the accompanying article or in this question-and-answer format.

The perennial question is: Why did I not include Satan/Lucifer/the BIG DEVIL of Christian mythology and religious lore? Simply, I did not because Mr. Gygax has not, and I tried to adhere to official AD&D® game rules wherever possible. His reasons for excluding Satan are best given by him; my own objections, from a game designer's point of view, boil down to the simple judgment that there is no room in the AD&D game system for a devil more powerful than Asmodeus. The few (in number) forces of good have enough to worry about without tipping the balance any further on the side of the diabolic. For those DMs who wish a devil in their campaigns directly involved in Prime Material Plane affairs, I direct you to Gorgoth, described in the accompanying article.

A number of readers asked for specific maps or geographical descriptions of the Nine Hells, with encounter tables. None are given, for two reasons — to allow a DM to detail the hells as he or she sees fit, and to make it truly "unknown territory" for players and their characters. (I haven't the time, nor does DRAGON Magazine have the space, to do justice to the hells in such a way, either — remember that each of the Nine Hells could well be as big as the Prime Material Plane, of which our Earth is just one example!)

A number of readers have also asked about player characters slaying devils: Yes, it can be done, with experience points awarded as given in the DMG. Most dukes are worth 8000 +18/hp if a pit fiend, and up to 10,000 +20/hp if stronger; ten times the given amount is awarded for actually slaying a devil on its plane of origin. But note, though, that devils *know* they are forever destroyed if slain on their home plane, and will always seek to fight elsewhere. If an archdevil is forever slain, another devil will take its place — after all vie for it!

Lawful evil player characters (or, for that matter, those of any alignment) who slay devils are *not* transformed or promoted into their places, and no player character(s) will ever be strong enough to wipe out all of the devils of the hells; not even gods can accom-

plish that, or it would have been done long ago. On the other hand, a party of adventurers who try to stay hidden and avoid archdevils are simply not important (dangerous) enough to call out the entire defenses of the hells for — so one need not fear that Amduscias and 29 companies of abishai will be drawn up in full battle gear waiting to welcome all visitors to Avernus.

A few mistakes creep into every article (when I get one perfect, I'll probably retire!): I changed Sekolah from male to female and forgot all about doing so (see "Out on a Limb" in issue #77), managed to hash the 2nd-level magic-user spell *irritation* into "invitation" in the "Spells in the hells" section of issue #76, and somehow the word "ice" got dropped from the type of devils that Baalphegor can *summon*.

Another inconsistency problem: Mr. Gygax's original article (see issue #75) gave Baftis as Baalzebul's consort, and so did I. (*Editor's note: Ed was given an advance look at Mr. Gygax's manuscript during the preparation of his own original article, to ensure that the two pieces of writing would be as compatible as possible.*) However, Monster Manual II does not mention Baftis at all, and gives (poor overworked!) Bensozia as consort to both Asmodeus and Baalzebul. Hmmm . . . perhaps something has happened to Baftis, but I prefer to go with Mr. Gygax's original article in this case, based on my assumption (held also by several readers who asked about this) that Asmodeus would not share his consort with anyone — even if it would give him an ally/spy in Baalzebul's camp; the Overlord could not be sure that Baalzebul would not use her thus against him. (I await any official word on this, but for purists (*sigh*), Monster Manual II must take precedence as an official source. I guess Baftis is no more. . . .)

Many readers also posed searching questions concerning the hells, which I have attempted to answer in the same spirit here:

1. How large is a company of devils? How is one organized?

A company of devils is the "standard" military unit in the hells, and consists of 333 devils of the specific type in question, organized such that each 10 devils report to a dominant "sergeant" type, or "kohora" as he is called (seldom officially) in the hells, and every 10 of these report in turn to an "akkrabar." These in turn report to the duke or unique devil in charge of the company (in some cases by means of messenger

mephits and spined devils, but usually in person, so as to minimize treachery and deception).

There are thus 300 "line troops," 30 kohoras, and 3 akkrabars, plus a commander, in the average company. Weaponry, tactics, and actual effectiveness of the diabolic companies varies according to the type of devils, and their commander. The actual combat strengths of companies also vary, and are usually well under the nominal totals, but all companies have additional reserves and training cadres. In battle, all kohoras are of equal rank (a "line troop" devil will obey the last order given by any kohora, unless an akkrabar or his commander overrule it, or give another command), and in like manner, all akkrabars are of equal rank, working together to cover for each other and reporting to their commander as necessary — usually one representative reporting from each company, for a commander usually has many companies under him.

A few companies (the pit fiends under Huti-jin, for example) do not follow this system of ranks, but rather consist of equals (the "companies" of pit fiends under Huti-jin are only a tenth as big as those described above, with 33 nobles in each, and it is also thought that Baalzebul's companies of malebranche are of a third normal strength — that is, with 111 malebranche in each). Some sages believe that the "least" devils (nupperibo and spined) must be gathered 666 strong to form a company.

Any number of companies is an "army," any collection of forces belonging to more than one archdevil is a "host." The capitalized term "The Hosts of the Hells" refers collectively to the entire organized fighting might of the devils, and is a literary or hypothetical term; the devils would *never* be gathered all together in this fashion.

2. The devils Titivilus and Malphas are described as having strange abilities to confuse the meanings of words, and to deceive listeners, employing mind-reading talents to do so. How can a DM handle this in the game?

Titivilus is like a contract lawyer, or a DM adjudicating the wording of a *wish* spell — he always looks for all possible interpretations or holes in promises made and things said. Like many politicians, he rarely gives a definite answer or position, but always *appears* to do so by using such words as "inoperative," "determinism," "authority," "conclusive," and "appar-

ently," and such phrases as "under consideration" and "at this time." He will use jargon and archaic phrases — a DM can invent or re-use catch-phrases or industrial terminology and give them new meanings when playing the role of Titivilus; what Titivilus says usually doesn't mean what one thinks it does.

Titivilus delights in punning, circular arguments, philosophical debates, and other means of verbally bewildering others, and also enjoys being cryptic. He may well *polymorph* himself into the form of a sage or mystic of some sort, protecting his deceit with *misdirection*, and spout meaningless or false prophecies (or even impersonate a deity, if an unsuccessful *commune* spell is cast nearby).

Malphas, on the other hand, tries to appear honest. In his human or bird form, he will use his *tongues* ability to converse with intruders, employing *ESP* to learn from them, anticipate their questions, and answer in accordance with their thoughts and fears to make them think he is what he wishes to appear to them as. Malphas does not have horns, a tail, talons, or other such physical diabolic attributes, and can readily pass for an unusual human with strikingly handsome features; only his ruby-red pupils betray his origin.

All devils can communicate with any creature due to a limited "speech pattern translation" telepathy. Malphas, and several other unique devils, can use *tongues* to be fluent enough in a particular language to deceive a creature into thinking it is the devil's native tongue. Malphas can use his *ESP* in conjunction with this to appear, for instance, as a fellow member of a guild or society, or a "friend of a friend." He can ascertain passwords or other secret signs he is asked about by "reading" them from the questioner's mind at the same time the latter phrases the question.

The deceptions of both devils are thus a matter of cunning behavior and use of relevant powers, not a matter of magical or psionic manipulations of the minds of others. Both will attempt deceit when it profits them (to gain information from, or the aid of, a creature), but will often not bother; they have no need to play tricks on a half-

dozen adventurers, for instance, once they have determined all of interest that these individuals know and possess.

3. Is Arioch, Dispaters servant, the same Arioch mentioned in Michael Moorcock's well-known fantasy novels? If so, why is Arioch such a minor devil, of so little power? If not, why do they have the same name?

Arioch, the avenger of Dispaters (described in DRAGON issue #75 and mentioned in Monster Manual II), and Arioch, the Knight of the Swords and Lord of Hell (from Michael Moorcock's Eternal Champion series, particularly *The Knight of the Swords* and the Elric books), are two quite different beings.

Certainly there is no reason why two beings with the same name cannot exist (if a DM chooses to incorporate a version of Moorcock's Arioch into the campaign). In this case, we have two Ariochs because Mr. Moorcock and Mr. Gygas apparently both used the same sources to find a name for an evil being of great power. As further examples of "name-sameness," albeit for a different reason, see the descriptions of Azazel and Dagon in the accompanying article.

4. What prevents certain archdevils from simply attacking each other to take over other planes of the Nine Hells?

In a word, fear. No archdevil is sufficiently powerful to attack another without himself suffering; all of them fear being destroyed or defeated and exiled or demoted. Asmodeus has stated that he will destroy any devil who fosters war in the hells for any reason not satisfactory to the Overlord — and he is able to carry through on this threat, for he knows the truenames of all greater devils.

Furthermore, each archdevil lives with an aspect of uncertainty, not knowing precisely how many other beings know his truename, or which (and how many) of his servants will prove, in any open conflict, to be more loyal to another archdevil.

Also, the archdevils are fairly evenly matched; no one archdevil is certain of being able to decisively defeat or destroy another, and no one of them commands

sufficient military strength to expand (by spreading their troops over more planes) without possibly endangering their hold on their own plane. For instance, Baalzebul has his hands full just keeping Malbolge and Maladomini, an activity requiring much of his time and powers; he is too busy, and too prudent (see below), to launch an open assault on any weaker archdevil.

Battles of this sort, when they do occur, are by tradition conducted on Avernus, or wherever is convenient on Gehenna, Hades, and/or Acheron. This is one of the rules of the present regime that all archdevils are loath to break — and it is only through obedience to these laws that the strong can continue to rule their weaker fellows (the vastly greater numbers of devils below the rank of archdevil); if one breaks the rules, all archdevils are threatened, so all will act against the transgressor. Devils can move freely about the hells, but this does not mean that the archdevils continually hurl diabolic armies at each other: the Nine Hells is a place of authority and intrigue; open battle is between lesser devils, or against intruders or lemures. Archdevils avoid being drawn into direct conflict with one another; they prefer their present positions to death or greater subservience.

5. How many hit dice does an archdevil have, for attacking and spell-use determination? Only total hit points are given in the descriptions.

To find the hit dice of any archdevil (or any other creature described in this manner), divide the given number of hit points by 4.5 (the average number of hit points per 8-sided die) and round all fractions down to arrive at the whole-number result. As a rule of thumb, most members of the hierarchy of the hells have 13 or more hit dice (pit fiends, who form the bulk of the dukes, have 13); a few unique devils may employ certain spell-like powers in a manner equivalent to a spellcaster of a slightly different level than they have hit dice, at the DM's option. Examination of many of the specific devil descriptions in "The Nine Hells" will show many examples of this.

For example, Phongor (issue #76) has 129 hit points, which translates into 28 hit dice;

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his shocking *grasp* attack does 29-37 (1d8 +28) points of damage. Baalphégor (issue #76) has 82 hit points, the equivalent of 18 hit dice, so her *chain lightning* attack does 18d6 damage to its primary target.

6. In "Spells in the hells" (issue #76), the magic-user spell *rope trick* is said to reach an adjacent plane of the hells as its "extra-dimensional space." Does it reach a higher level, or a lower one? Can it be used to leave the hells when cast on Avernus or Nessus? Can player characters travel between the planes of the Nine Hells by means of this spell?

When a *rope trick* is employed in the hells, it actually creates (at the upper end of the rope) a *gate* that usually opens either upward or downward. On all the planes but Avernus and Nessus, there is a 40% chance that it opens into the next lower level, and a 60% chance that it opens upward into the next higher level; this result is *not* under the control of the spellcaster. When cast in Avernus, a *rope trick* will always open downward into Dis, and when cast in Nessus, it will always provide a *gate* upward into Caina.

Such *gates* last only for the spell duration — or until dispelled by any devil who has the power to do so — and even if cast repeatedly at the same location on one plane of the hells, will not always open at the same place on the adjacent plane it connects with. For instance, one cannot, based on a

previous journey, go to a certain cave on Avernus, cast a *rope trick*, and arrive in Dispatér's chambers in his palace in the Iron City; instead, such a *gate* will open in a different spot on Dis each time the spell is used.

When cast in the hells, this spell *always* consumes the rope — it is a one-way trip — and any number of beings can pass up it, or climb it at once. Flying creatures can only pass through the *gate* if they touch the rope at its top; if they merely fly above the rope, they will miss the *gate* entirely. Devils can pass freely through the *gate* created by a *rope trick* spell, in either or both directions, and can exercise their spell-like powers through the opening.

Player characters can use this spell to travel between adjacent planes of the hells, but not (under any circumstances except the simultaneous casting of a *rope trick* and *limited wish*) to enter or leave the hells from other planes. (This exception may not always work, either; it is up to the DM to judge, given the specific circumstances and the precise wording of the *limited wish*.) The "place of safety where no creature can find them" statement in the spell description does not, of course, apply in the hells.

7. What, precisely, are the limitations of a devil's ability to teleport without error?

This ability allows a devil to move from any point on any plane of the hells to any other point on the same plane, with pinpoint precision — and thus no possibility of arriving high or low, with resulting damage. If another living creature occupies the precise location desired, the devil will arrive as close as possible adjacent to it.

Prior visitation or detailed visualization of the location is not necessary for a devil within the hells — but this is necessary on (or when traveling to) Acheron, Hades, or Gehenna. A devil can combine its teleportation ability with its natural plane-shifting power (within the Nine Hells, Acheron, Gehenna, and Hades) to move anywhere within those planes — but dares not do so without authorization. (Archdevils are allowed to travel freely, but rarely do so; they are not allowed to bring sizable bodyguards with them, and are loath to arrive unannounced in a rival archdevil's realm all alone.)

A devil cannot teleport into mid-air, even if it is winged or has the ability to magically fly, but must appear on a horizontal surface (floor or ground) and move from there. A devil can *teleport* (and *plane shift*) objects and creatures it is actually touching, up to the standard limit of 2500 gp plus 1500 gp weight per hit die (or level of magic use, whichever is higher). Anything over its weight limit (DM's choice, not a player's nor the devil's, as to which item, if multiple items are involved) will simply be left behind, entirely unaffected. A devil cannot "throw" beings elsewhere by use of its *teleport* or *plane shift* powers without accompanying them (remember, physical

contact is required), and a devil summoned to the Prime Material Plane cannot *plane shift* except to return to its "home" plane on the hells either as soon as possible, or at the expiration of the *summoning* spell, or when it wishes to (depending on the circumstances, the powers of the devil, and the DM's decision), and can (as described above) take creatures and/or objects back to its home plane with it.

Perhaps it should be stressed here that with a few exceptions (*symbols*, *unholy words*, and *power words*), no devil "casts spells," using verbal, somatic, and material components; and thus, magical *silence*, physical grappling or engagement, etc., will not stop a devil from being able to use its magical powers. Ongoing psionic combat usually will (see DRAGON issue #78 for details of psionic combat), but the DM must judge this carefully. A devil can and will use its powers to disengage from combat, and flee the field, whenever it feels threatened — either psionically, or when reduced to only a few hit points through physical combat. A devil will not stay in the face of certain death just because of the orders of its superiors or out of pride; its thinking in the former case follows the credo that "one death is imminent, and the other negotiable."

8. In issue #76, page 34, mention is made of Alastor, "the greatest pit fiend of all," and yet he is not personally described. What are his statistics?

Alastor was not described because he is just that — a pit fiend. None of the pit fiends in the hierarchy (each is marked with an asterisk in the listing given in Monster Manual II) were described individually in the earlier magazine article because they would have almost *doubled* the overall length of that article, with seemingly endless repetitions of the pit fiend entry that appears in the Monster Manual. However, here are some facts and figures that can be used in an adventure that involves "the greatest pit fiend of all":

Alastor the Grim (sometimes called Alastor the Silent) is a pit fiend having maximum hit points (13 HD, 114 hp), *genius* intelligence, and the strength of a storm giant (ability score of 24, +6 to hit, +12 on damage). He fights with all weapons, and usually executes beings with a great black double-bladed +4 *battleaxe* (12' long, 2- 12 +4 damage, plus Alastor's strength bonus, vs. opponents of all sizes) or a giant scythe (non-magical, 9' blade and 13' handle, damage 1- 10 plus Alastor's bonus vs. all opponents). He never wears armor, is covered with the gouges and twisted flesh of gruesome, poorly healed wounds, and has broken, tattered wings (he can fly, but only 6" per round). He is thought to be the closest friend and confidant of Asmodeus, and is unswervingly loyal to the present Overlord. Alastor is grey-skinned, with wings of a sooty black appearance. He is otherwise a "normal" pit fiend (see the Monster Manual entry).

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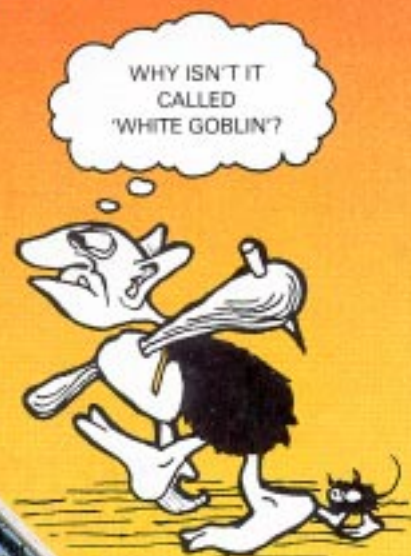
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Chronicles: a novel idea

New book begins telling the saga of Krynn

In late November TSR, Inc., will release the first book in a special fantasy trilogy: *The Dragonlance Chronicles: Dragons of Autumn Twilight*. Written by TSR book editor Margaret Weis and game designer Tracy Hickman, *Dragons of Autumn Twilight* begins the saga of a band of adventurers and heroes who struggle to save their world from an invasion of dragons. The story is based upon the current series of AD&D® game adventure modules describing the world of Krynn.

Those who've been following the DRAGONLANCE™ series of modules are already familiar with the major characters in the story: the grandfatherly hill dwarf Flint, the mischievous kender Tasslehoff, the twins-who-aren't-twins Raistlin and Caramon, the barbarian princess Goldmoon and her lover Riverwind, and the brooding half-elven warrior Tanis, torn by conflicting desires.

Two short stories on some of the major characters in the saga appeared in DRAGON® Magazine earlier this year. The sorcerous trials of the embittered mage Raistlin, who must learn to live with his all-too-helpful brother Caramon, were described by Margaret Weis in "The Test of the Twins" (issue #83). A misadventure of the kender thief Tasslehoff Burrfoot, "A Stone's Throw Away" by Roger Moore, was printed in issue #85.

A number of readers have written in to ask for more about the DRAGONLANCE saga. They will be happy to learn that the novel *Dragons of Autumn Twilight* has all they could hope for, and more. The lives and personalities of the heroes of the saga are covered in depth, and the trials they undergo are vividly brought to life.

The novel vs. the modules

Though the trilogy will parallel most of the action and events in the modules, certain differences will be found between them. Margaret Weis comments below on these changes:

"The purpose of *The Dragonlance Chronicles*, as far as gamers are concerned, is to provide insight into the characters and their world of Krynn. The novel's plot was written in such a way that people would 'play the novel' if they wanted to. However, we worked very hard to keep certain aspects of the modules a secret, such as traps and secret doors. In places where we used them, we sometimes altered details about the means of opening the doors or what sort of trap would be found. This frees Dungeon Masters from the worry that the players only need read the books to get through the modules without harm to their characters. In some cases we invented new encounters or cut existing ones from the modules for the sake of the story. I can think of one room that appears in the book that is pretty bad, and I'm sure no one will want to go there in the module — but the same room in the module is harmless!

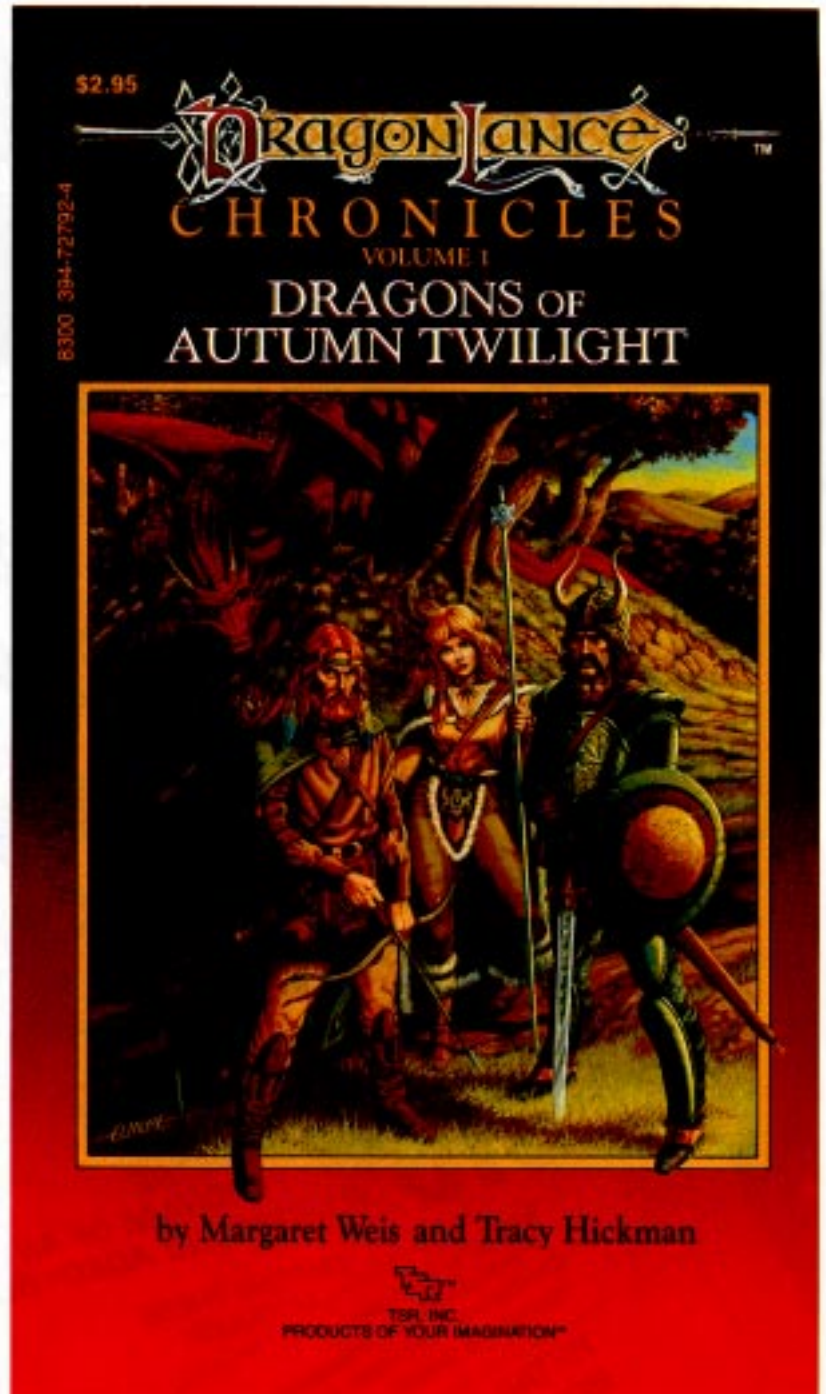
"The DRAGONLANCE novels present one possible 'reality.' We hope that game players and Dungeon Masters will develop other 'realities' in their Krynn campaigns. Ours is certainly not the only way, nor the 'right' way, to play through the DRAGONLANCE adventure. We were, of course, extremely limited in our choice of where we could take our characters. There are large areas of Krynn that our characters

will never see, monsters they will never fight, and encounters they will never have, simply because we decided the characters would, for example, travel north on their adventure instead of east.

"We worked very hard to make the locations and setting coincide with those appearing in the game modules, so that a gamer might read the books and say, 'Gee, I know this place; our group fought the

draconians here.' Or he could remember the books while gaming and say, 'This was the decision Tanis had to make in the book — I think I'll do it differently and see what happens.'

"Above all, we wanted the book to enhance the enjoyment you get from playing the game. Some parts of the books were actually developed when Tracy and I were playtesting the modules. The wonderful



scenes in the first book between Raistlin and [a gully dwarf named] Bupu came to life in one of these gaming sessions."

Building the world of Krynn

A world and its people do not simply appear out of nowhere. Tracy Hickman describes some of the work that went into creating the background:

"The whole thing began as a story. From the first scenes at the Inn of the Last Home to the terrible confrontation at the climax of the series, the story was plotted and outlined before any other work was done. That outline has been the framework for the entire DRAGONLANCE series. Once the story line was firmly in hand, the DRAGONLANCE design team set out its next tasks.

"The world of Krynn is one of the most ambitious and complex gaming environments ever devised. Over a year of extensive pre-planning and design was put in by the design team before work on the first module was even begun. We wanted to produce a believable epic fantasy world. We drew up a historical time line stretching back three millennia, and established legends and heroes from that history. The prevailing winds, ocean currents, and climatic bands of the world were plotted. The growth of civilizations and their influences was also considered.

"This was the start. The philosophical foundations of the universe and the gods

that would represent that philosophy were detailed. We plotted the constellations of the night sky and developed astrological symbols; folk tales and world mythology were then created.

"All of this data was compiled in a reference work that we call 'The Source.' Some of the background material from The Source will be found in module DL 5, *Dragons of Mystery*. However, much material still remains hidden beneath the covers of The Source's black binder.

"*Dragons of Autumn Twilight* is not only an entertaining novel, it is also an invaluable asset to any DRAGONLANCE campaign. It provides exquisite detail on the world for the game referee, and gives players a feel for their characters and an understanding of their characters' backgrounds and origins.

"The novel can also aid the Dungeon Master by giving him a truer feeling for the game world. One of the most difficult things for a DM to attain is a sense of the world he is running. A great campaign setting is more than a series of monster encounters; it is made up of sights, sounds, textures, smells, and feelings. This is hard to get across in the often dry, reference format of a game adventure module. However, *Dragons of Autumn Twilight* conveys not only a wealth of background information on the world, but also the sights and sounds that make Krynn a place that gamers will want to visit time and again."

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We're proud of the fact that many of the people who read DRAGON® Magazine live in countries around the world. But we know, from letters we receive from some of them, that a lot of our readers in foreign countries are frustrated because few, if any, other players live close enough to them to meet them.

Our solution is the DRAGON Magazine World Gamers Guide, a feature that will begin appearing as soon as we receive information from some of those frustrated gamers. Here's how it works:

If you live outside the continental United States and Canada, you are eligible to have your name and address printed in the guide, free of charge. Put your name and full address on a postcard or in a short letter and send it to World Gamers Guide, c/o DRAGON Magazine, P.O. Box 110, Lake Geneva WI 53147, USA.

Your address must be complete (including the country you live in) and legible; we won't take a chance on printing a bad address by publish-

ing something we can't decipher. If you want to, you can also list up to three role-playing games that you enjoy, so that anyone who writes to you will know something about what you like. We will publish each name and address for three consecutive issues; if you want to be listed for more than three issues, you'll have to send us another postcard when your first listing expires.

Sorry, but we can't extend this offer to U.S. servicemen who live overseas, or to people who live in sparsely populated areas of the United States or Canada, because there are still more gamers per square mile in places like Utah or Alberta than there are in places like Japan and India. We can only afford to use a limited amount of space for the World Gamers Guide, and we would run into a severe problem if we tried to expand it any further. We hope that you who live in the continental United States and Canada will still appreciate the Guide, and use it to get in touch with gamers from other countries who would love to hear from you.

SF/gaming convention calendar

UTHERCON 4, Nov. 9-11

To be held at University of Texas in Austin, Texas, this convention will feature a wide range of role-playing games. Registration fees are \$5. Contact: David F. Nalle, 3212 Red River #109, Austin TX 78705, or call (512)477-1704.

CONTACT '84, Nov. 16-18

This science-fiction convention will be staged at the Sheraton Inn in Evansville, Ind. Guests of honor include Timothy Zahn and the creators of the *Star Trek*® role-playing game. Registration fees are \$10. For details, contact: RCSFA, P.O. Box 3894, Evansville IN 47737.

UNICON 1, Nov. 30 - Dec. 2

This gaming convention will include various role-playing competitions, retail booths, and speakers. Admissions fees are \$5 for the weekend, \$2 per day for Nov. 30 and Dec. 2, and \$3 for Dec. 1. For more information, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: John A. Stormes, Box 279, L.A. Pittenger Student Center, 2000 University Avenue, Muncie IN 47306.

U-MASS CON, Dec. 1-2

This gaming convention will take place at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst,

Mass. For more details, contact: Steven Bailey, P.O. Box 117, Amherst MA 01002.

EVECON II, Dec. 28-30

This convention will be staged at the Tysons Westpark Hotel in McLean, Va. Attendance will be limited to 1,200 people. Admission fees are \$12 until December 1, and \$15 at the door. For more details, contact: EveCon, P.O. Box 128, Aberdeen MD 21001.

RUSTYCON II, Jan. 18-20

This convention will be held at the Sea-Tac Hyatt in Seattle, Wash. Registration fees are \$15 until December 31, and \$18 at the door. Contact: Michael Scanlon, P.O. Box 47132, Seattle WA 98146.

SON OF PANDEMONIUM, Jan. 19

This one-day gaming event will take place in downtown Toronto, Ontario. Features will include tournaments, an auction, demonstrations, and a miniatures painting contest. Preregistration is essential; registration fees are \$5, plus \$1 per tournament entered. For additional information, contact: Dungeon Parties, Inc., P.O. Box 67, Stn. F, Toronto, Ontario M4Y 2L4, or telephone (416)924-1989.

WARCON '85, Feb. 9-10

Sponsored by MSC Nova, the convention will be held at Texas A&M University. For further details, contact: MSC Nova, Box J-1, Texas A&M University, College Station TX 77844, or telephone (409)845-1515.

WAMCON '85, Feb. 15-17

This convention will be held at the Chamberlain Hotel near Hampton, Va. Events will include a writer's seminar, panel discussions, and NASA displays. A. C. Crispin will be guest of honor. Admission fees are \$15 until December 31, and \$20 at the door. A special gaming fee of \$10 exists for those participating in gaming only. Contact: WamCon, P.O. Box 2223, Poquoson VA 23662.

WISCON 9, Feb. 22-24

This annual science-fiction convention will be staged at the Concourse Hotel in Madison, Wis. Guests of honor will be writer Lisa Tuttle and artist Alicia Austin. Admission fees are \$13 until January 31, and \$18 at the door. Contact: SF3, P.O. Box 1624, Madison WI 53701, or call (608)251-6226 (days) or (608)233-0326 (evenings).

COASTCON '85, Mar. 8-10

This annual convention will be staged at the Royal d'Iberville Hotel in Biloxi, Miss. Toastmaster for the convention will be Vonda McIntyre, and Alan Dean Foster will be among the guests of honor. Gaming activities, an art show, a costume party, and an auction will be some of the features available

at the convention. For more details, contact: Coastcon, P.O. Box 1423, Biloxi MS 39535.

STELLARCON 10, Mar. 22-24

For more details about this gaming convention, contact: Stellarcon 10, Box 4, Elliott University Center, UNC-Greensboro, Greensboro NC 27412.

CONTEST II, Mar. 29-31

This gaming convention will occur in Tulsa, Okla. Features will include science-fiction and fantasy role-playing games, war games, and miniatures tournaments. For additional information, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Contest II, Tactical Simulation Society, P.O. Box 4726, Tulsa OK 74159.

POINTCON VIII, Mar. 30-31

Sponsored by the Military Affairs Wargames Committee, this convention will be staged at the U.S. Military Academy in West Point, N.Y. Board and role-playing games, tournaments, and demonstrations will be some of the activities featured at the convention. Admission to this event is free. For more details, contact: Cadet John Surdu, P.O. Box 3206, West Point NY 10997.

GOLD CON III, Apr. 27-28


To be held at Omni Auditorium in Pompano Beach, Fla., events for this convention will include historical, fantasy, and science-fiction games, various movies, and a dealers' area. Participants of U.S. Armed Forces are welcome. Registration fees are \$6. For further details, contact: John Dunn, Omni Box Office, B.C.C.-North, 1000 Coconut Creek Blvd., Pompano Beach FL 33066, or telephone (305)973-2249.

TALLY CON 4, May 24-26

This gaming convention will be held at the Hilton in Tallahassee, Fla. Guests of honor will be L. Sprague and Catherine Crook de Camp. Activities will include an art show and sale, panel discussions, a game room, and "filksinging." Registration fees are \$10 until January 1, \$12 until March 1, and \$15 thereafter. For more information, contact: The Grinning Gremlin, 824-C W. Tharpe St., Tallahassee FL 32303, or telephone (904)385-1518.

HATCON 3, June 6-7

To be held at the Ramada Inn, this convention will include a hat masquerade, a pool party, a champagne Sunday brunch, and various games. Guests of honor will be Ian and Betty Ballantine and Fred Haskell. Registration fees are \$15 until December 1, \$25 until April 1, \$30 until June 1, and \$35 at the door. For additional information, contact: Kennedy Poyser, CT SF Society, 108 Park Ave., Danbury CT 06810, or telephone (203)743-1872.



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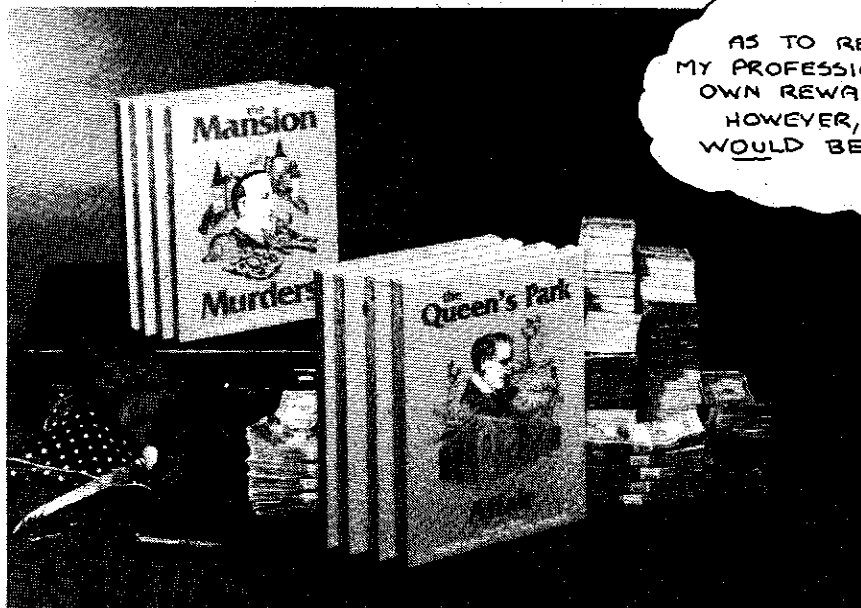
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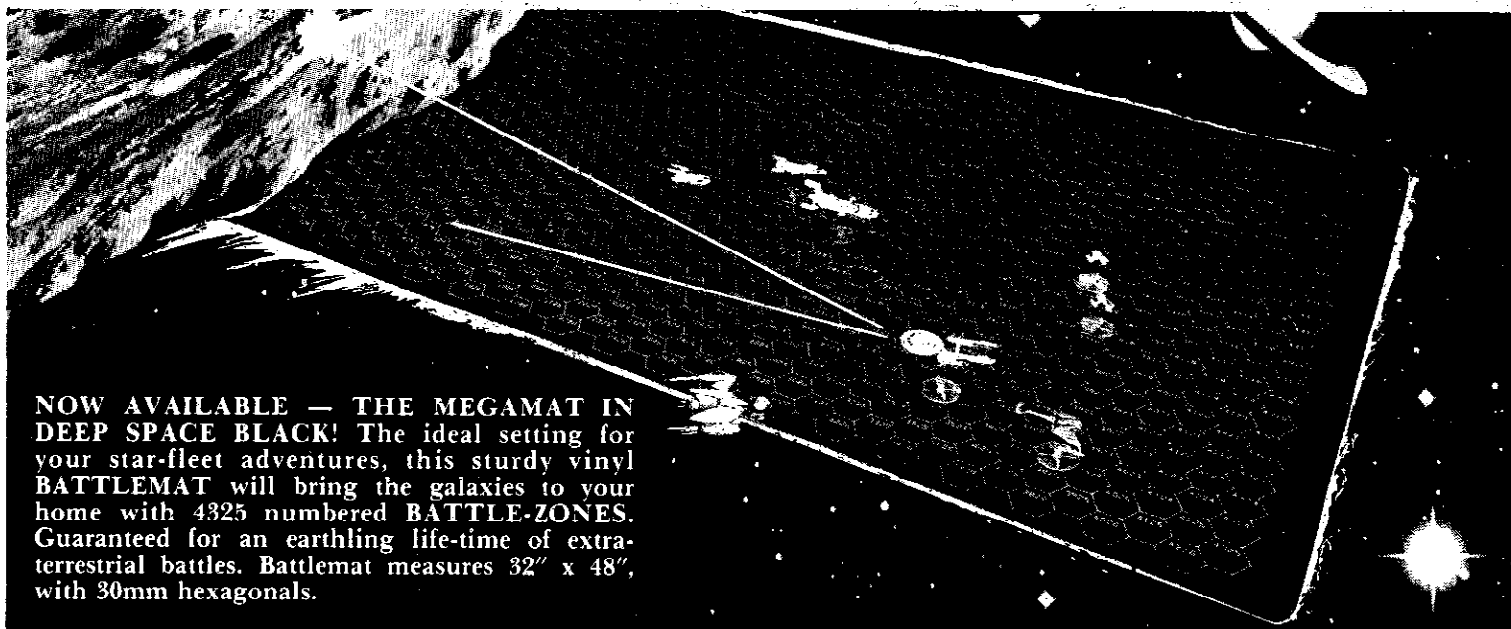


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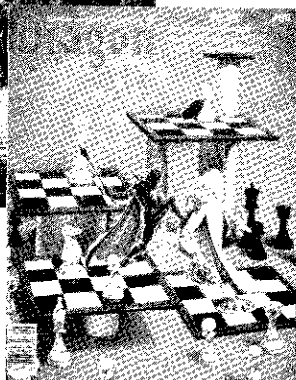
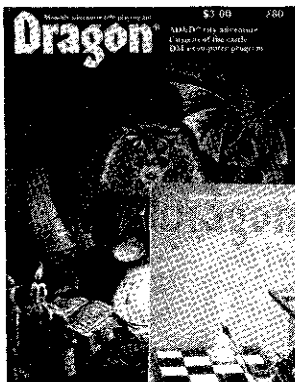
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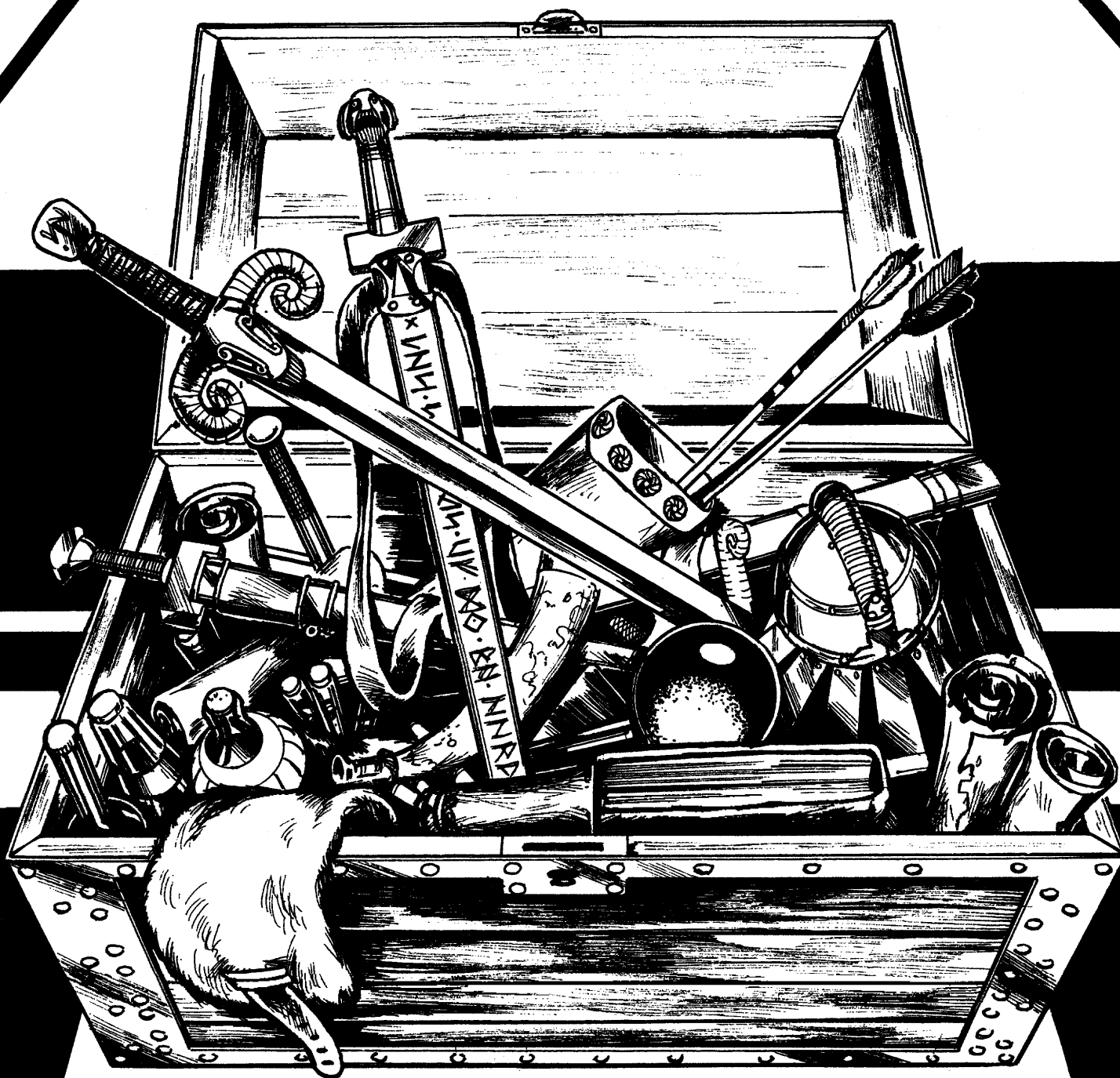
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Illustrations by Roger Raupp

Potions

Oil of Phosphorescence

by Michael Persinger

A slight application of this oil will cause the user to believe that it is some other form of magical oil, generally *oil of slipperiness*. However, when it is fully applied to a living being's body, the user's skin will suddenly start to glow as if it were aflame. This bioluminescence is permanent, and can only be negated by a *limited wish*, a *wish*, or a *remove curse* cast by a cleric of 9th level or higher. The glow emitted from the body is usually a yellow-green color, and the affected individual is highly visible at night or against dark surroundings. All attempts to hide, short of covering oneself completely in blankets, hiding in another room, or going invisible, are doomed to fail.

Experience Point Value: Nil

Gold Piece Sale Value: 100

Potion of Direction

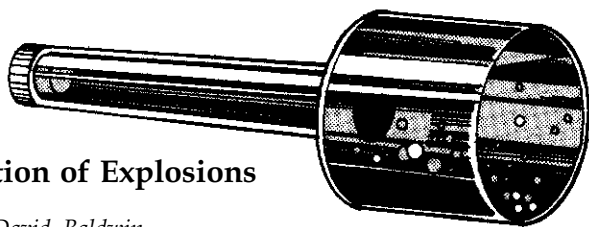
by Roger E. Moore

The effects of this drink last much longer than most potions, continuing for 12-48 (12d4) hours. Consumption of this potion enables a character to retrace his path over any solid terrain, in effect preventing the character from getting lost. If a *maze* spell is cast at a character under the influence of this potion, he will re-emerge from the *maze* after only 2-5 segments. If the reversed form of *find the path* is cast at such a character, the spell and potion will cancel each other out; the potion will be neutralized, but the spell will not take effect.

This potion does *not* have the same effect as *find the path*, in that it will not provide clues to the shortest path to a desired location. Note that the user will only be able to retrace a path he travels from the moment the drink is consumed to the moment the drink wears off. Any distance covered before or after that won't automatically be recalled. Once the potion wears off, the enhanced memory one has for the terrain covered will be forgotten; one must then rely on a map of the area to successfully retrace his path.

Experience Point Value: 350

Gold Piece Sale Value: 800



Potion of Explosions

by David Baldwin

Though this potion appears to be like any other drinkable fluid, it is not meant to be consumed. The liquid is a powerful magical explosive that only requires contact with the open air and a physical disturbance of some sort (being dropped or thrown, struck with an object, or shaken vigorously) to set it off. A *potion of explosions* will be found in a tightly sealed bottle similar to most potion containers. The container is generally fragile, of a ceramic or glass material that would probably break (save vs. crushing blow) if thrown against a hard surface. Most of these containers, of course, will be wrapped in cloth or stored where they aren't likely to be broken or jostled.

If the entire bottle of liquid is thrown and breaks, this will generate a blast of 30 feet in radius, doing 6d6 damage to all within this area (save vs. breath weapon for half damage). Sometimes a "dose" of this liquid comes packaged in six small glass or ceramic vials that can be thrown separately. Each exploding vial does 1d6 damage to any character or creature within a 5-foot radius. The small size and light weight of these vials makes them difficult to throw accurately; attacks intended to hit a creature directly are made at -2 "to hit." The vials are especially fragile, taking a -2 penalty on any saving

throw to determine breakage. The victim of a direct hit from a vial or an entire bottle of this liquid will take half damage if a save vs. breath weapon succeeds, but must make that saving throw at a -6 penalty.

If an intended target is missed, the projectile will continue until it strikes the ground or some other solid object — possibly causing damage to someone else in the vicinity of the impact point. If the container hits its target but does not break, the liquid inside will not be set off, and the container can be picked up and re-thrown. The container must make a saving throw vs. fall if it is dropped from a height of 5 feet or less (see the DMG for details). In addition, there is a 50% chance that the liquid will explode if the container is shaken or jostled vigorously for longer than one segment. The same 50% chance applies on each consecutive segment; for instance, if a character with a *potion of explosions* in his backpack moves at faster than walking speed for three consecutive segments, three separate rolls are made to see if the liquid explodes.

If someone tries to identify this "potion" by taking a small taste, several things can happen. Opening the bottle and exposing the contents to the air activates the explosive fluid, and there is a 5% chance that the character doing so will inadvertently jar the bottle enough in the act of opening it to set off the explosive. No saving throw would be given to the opener against the explosion in this case. If a tiny bit is swallowed to sample the potion, the drinker will feel his heart accelerate and will feel as if he's just sampled a *potion of speed* (assuming he knows what that feels like). This effect will only be felt for one round, and does not actually give the drinker any of the benefits of such a potion. If the entire contents of a bottle or vial are drunk, the character must make a system shock roll. If the roll is failed, the liquid explodes inside the drinker, doing 6d6 (or 1d6) damage and requiring another system shock roll to avoid immediate death. If the first system shock roll succeeds, the drinker becomes extremely ill and will be incapacitated for 3-6 hours — unable to walk without assistance, attack, or defend himself.

Potions of explosions are extremely rare. Few alchemists will agree to manufacture this liquid because of the great danger involved, and even fewer treasure hoards will contain it.

Experience Point Value: 450 (full bottle) or 75 (per vial)

Gold Piece Sale Value: 900 (full bottle) or 150 (per vial)

Potion of Frost Resistance

by Michael Persinger

This potion grants immunity to the ill effects of all forms of normal cold down to -100°F. Partial resistance to magical cold is also granted; saving throws vs. cold spells are made at +4 on the die, and damage from cold attacks is reduced by 2 points per die of damage, down to a minimum of 1 point per die. If only half a dose is consumed, the potion's benefit against magical cold is halved (+2 on saves, -1 on each damage die) but the protection from normal cold is unchanged. A full dose lasts one turn (10 rounds); a half dose lasts 5 rounds. Note that the icy breath weapons of creatures such as white dragons, winter wolves, and hoar foxes are included in the category of "magical cold."

Experience Point Value: 250

Gold Piece Sale Value: 400

Potion of Mind Restoration

by Michael Persinger

When consumed, this magical liquid will cure any form of normal or magical insanity, and will also restore a *feebleminded* character to health. If a psionic character who was attacked while defenseless later drinks this potion, it will cure any psychic damage he suffered except for death, idiocy, the permanent loss of an attack or defense mode, or a robot state. This potion will also enable a psionic character to recover psionic strength points at twice the normal rate for two hours after the potion is consumed.

Experience Point Value: 650

Gold Piece Sale Value: 1300

Potion of Missile Protection

by Michael Persinger

The effects of this magical potion last for 3-18 rounds. When consumed, the potion gives partial protection from all *magic missile* attacks. The drinker gains a saving throw vs. spell each time a single *magic missile* hits him; if the throw is successful, no damage is taken from the *missile*. If the throw is failed, only one point of damage will be taken from the *missile*. Note that separate throws are required for each *magic missile*, so a target struck by six of them from an 11th-level wizard must save six times.

Experience Point Value: 400

Gold Piece Sale Value: 800

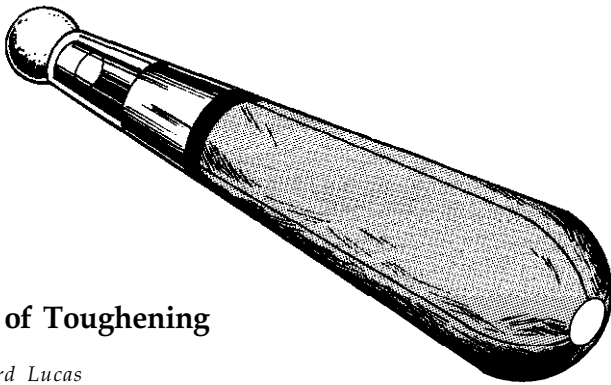
Potion of Nutrition

by Michael Persinger

The imbiber of this potion can go one week without needing any food or water, and will suffer no ill effects as a result. Protection is also granted against a *chime of hunger*; the user of a *potion of nutrition* receives an initial saving throw vs. spell to negate the effect of the *chime* upon himself. And even if the throw fails, the drinker receives two (not one) saving throws vs. spell on each succeeding round to end the hunger he feels.

Experience Point Value: 150

Gold Piece Sale Value: 500



Potion of Toughening

by Richard Lucas

Quaffing this potion will immediately add 2-18 (d12 + d6) hit points to the consumer's current total, even if the final total exceeds the maximum number of hit points possible for the character. However, these new hit points are held in reserve. Any damage taken by the character will first be taken off the character's own hit points; only after all of these hit points are gone will hit points be deducted from those bestowed by this potion.

The duration of this potion (and the hit points granted by it) is only 7-12 turns. Thus, if someone has received extra hit points from this potion and has lost all of his normal hit points, he has a limited time to find a way to heal himself of at least some of the damage he has taken before the potion wears off and his extra hit points disappear. If this happens, the character will collapse unconscious with 0 hit points and continue to lose 1 hit point per round thereafter (as per the DMG, p. 82). Unless the stricken character receives aid, death will occur at -10 hit points. Any normal method of healing injuries (*cure* spells, *potions of healing*, etc.) will work on such a character.

If the drinker loses all of his normal hit points *and* all the hit points bestowed by the potion, he immediately falls unconscious (or dies; see below) and is considered to have a negative total of hit points equal to the number of points that were granted by the potion. If this number is between -2 and -9, the character has a chance of recovering if he receives aid before sinking to -10. If this number is -10 or lower, the character dies instantly.

Potions of toughening should only be taken singly; if a second dose is consumed before the first one has worn off, the second dose has no effect, and the drinker must make a system shock roll or die.

Experience Point Value: 300

Gold Piece Sale Value: 600

Psionics-boosting potions

by Roger E. Moore

A few potions are known to psionic magic-users and alchemists that are capable of increasing a psionic character's attack and defense strengths for a limited time after being consumed. A potion of this type takes effect 2-8 segments after imbibing it, and the effects can last anywhere from 2-40 turns (2d20).

Below are descriptions of these potions, giving their effects and brief words on the materials required to manufacture them. Specific details of potion-making are left up to the DM. Experience points for these potions can only be gained by psionic characters who consume and use them; the drinker must employ at least one of the psionic modes affected by the potion before the duration of that dose expires. No experience-point award is given for simply drinking it.

The potions described here are most probably the only ones of their kind. The major ingredient of each is taken from a non-humanoid creature native to the Prime Material plane that has psionic attack or defense ability, and the effects of each potion are closely tied to the abilities of the source creature. These major ingredients must be taken from creatures slain without the use of magic or psionics; failure to do so will spoil the ingredient and make the resultant potion useless — perhaps (10% chance) even poisonous!

A character who drinks a psionics-boosting potion receives extra strength points when he employs one of the attack/defense modes that the potion affects. This boost enables the drinker to attack or defend as if his current psionic strength was increased by the amount of the bonus. However, the user cannot receive these bonus points if he doesn't have enough of his own psionic strength points remaining to use the attack or defense mode normally. For example, someone who drinks the violet potion will not receive bonus points for using a *psionic blast* unless that character has at least 20 strength points remaining (so that he would be able to use that attack mode even if he had not drunk the potion) and actually employs a *psionic blast* attack.

Green — This potion adds 50 points onto all *psionic blast* attacks made by the drinker, and 100 points onto all defense modes used as well. A specimen of tissue from an algoid is required to manufacture this potion.

Experience Point Value: 300

Gold Piece Sale Value: 600

Violet — This potion adds 100 points to all *psionic blast* attacks made by the drinker, and 50 points to any defense modes used while the potion is in effect. The brain of a mind flayer is required to make this potion.

Experience Point Value: 300

Gold Piece Sale Value: 650

White — Adds 50 attack points to all *mind thrust* attacks made by the drinker, but no defensive alterations. This potion requires one brain mole to create.

Experience Point Value: 200

Gold Piece Sale Value: 300

Gray — Adds 50 attack points to all *psychic crush* attacks, but makes no defensive alterations in the imbiber. Parts from a psionic gray ooze are required to manufacture such a potion.

Experience Point Value: 200

Gold Piece Sale Value: 350

Silver — This drink will add 50 strength points to any *ego whip* or *id insinuation* attacks made by the drinker, and 50 points to any psionic defenses used. An intellect devourer's body is required to make this potion.

Experience Point Value: 300

Gold Piece Sale Value: 650

Yellow — This potion adds 50 points to all *id insinuation* attacks made by the drinker, and also makes the drinker immune to psionic attack for the duration of the potion's effects. One-half cubic foot of

material from a living colony of psionic yellow mold, collected in an appropriate container, is needed to make this potion.

Experience Point Value: 300

Gold Piece Sale Value: 600

Red — This potion adds 25 points to any *psionic blast*, *psychic crush*, or *mind thrust* attacks made by the drinker, as well as 100 points to any psionic defense mounted. The brain of a su-monster is required to make this drink.

Experience Point Value: 350

Gold Piece Sale Value: 650

Scrolls

Scroll of Domination

by David Baldwin

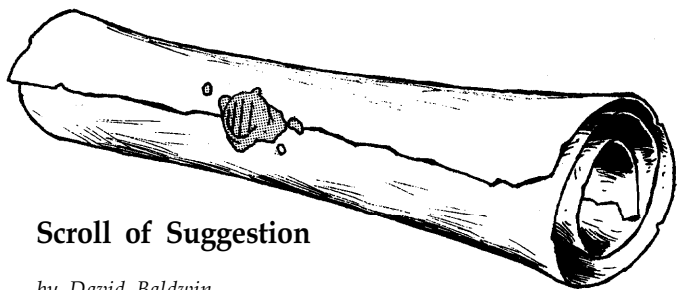
A *scroll of domination* is a powerful magical document that can cast an advanced form of *charm* spell over any one being normally affected by a *charm* person spell. The document requires a *read magic* spell to understand, and may only be used by magic-users. When the scroll is read to enact its magic, the writing disappears and the scroll is thereafter useless, just as if it were a scroll of spells.

The target of this *dweomer* must be within 60 feet of the scroll reader when the power of the scroll is exercised. The target is allowed a saving throw vs. spell at -2 (with wisdom bonus/penalty applicable); if the throw fails, the being becomes *charmed* and will obey the caster's verbal commands. And, if both caster and victim share a common language, the victim will also obey mental commands of the magic-user as well. This *charm* power is the same as that used by vampires (see the DMG, p. 65). The victim will not obey a self-destructive act, but the *charm* will not be broken if such a command is issued.

The influence of this scroll can only be broken by a *dispel magic* or *remove curse* spell from a spellcaster of 12th level or higher, or by a *limited wish*. The *charm* power is of relatively short duration, lasting only 4-16 hours. The victim will be freed of the scroll's effect sooner than this if he is taken farther than 60 feet from the scroll reader (the victim will not do so of his own "free" will), or if a magic circle of protection comes between the magic-user and his victim.

Experience Point Value: 1500

Gold Piece Sale Value: 4500



Scroll of Suggestion

by David Baldwin

This scroll appears to be an official pronouncement, personal missive, or other such innocuous document, and may be found in treasure hoards like any other scroll. No magical spell is required to read the scroll's contents. A magical *curse*, however, is worked into the writing of the scroll such that whoever reads the scroll will immediately become subject to the next normal suggestion heard as if under the influence of the spell *suggestion*. The victim is allowed a saving throw vs. spell to avoid succumbing to the suggestion, but at the following penalties: -2 for a mildly dangerous act, -4 for a normal request involving little chance of personal danger, and -6 for an extremely reasonable request or suggestion involving no obvious risk. Under no circumstances will a victim perform a life-threatening or suicidal act, as per the provisions for the *suggestion* spell. Hear-

ing such a suggestion, or making the saving throw allowed for other types of suggestions, will void the curse and negate the effect of the scroll for that character.

The determining factor in defining a reasonable suggestion is its potential to cause *physical* harm to the one acting upon it. The possibility of inconvenience or financial loss does not make a suggestion unreasonable. For instance, a character under the effect of this scroll would save at -6 against a suggestion to give away a magical item or cast a certain spell on behalf of the one making the request — as long as relinquishing the item or casting the spell would not put the character in immediate physical danger.

Because they are reusable, *scrolls of suggestion* have become popular with many royal courts and governments. Sometimes a messenger bearing one is waylaid by a monster; hence their appearance in treasure hoards.

For a suggestion that is to be carried out over a span of time, the scroll's curse will remain in effect after the scroll is read for a number of days equal to the reader's intelligence score subtracted from 22. (Creatures with intelligence of 22 or higher are immune to the scroll's effect.) If the reader of the scroll does not hear anything resembling a suggestion or request by the time this duration expires, he will not be affected. (This is highly unlikely, since the reader is very susceptible, and even a bit of wishful thinking will be taken seriously.) If the reader has been affected and is trying to fulfill a request that takes time, the enchantment will be broken when the duration expires, and the victim will be thereafter free of the obligation of the suggestion.

The influence of this scroll upon an affected character may be detected by a *detect charm* spell, and its effects may be removed by a *dispel magic* or *remove curse* spell cast by a spellcaster of name level or higher (11th level minimum for magic-users, 9th level minimum for clerics, etc.). A *wish*, *limited wish*, or *alter reality* spell will also remove this effect.

Experience Point Value: Nil

Gold Piece Sale Value: 1000

Rings

Ring of the Eagle

by Roger E. Moore

This ring allows the wearer to *shapechange* at will into a giant eagle for an unlimited period of time. All of the wearer's worn or carried possessions (except for live beings) are merged with the giant eagle form and will be unusable while the ring wearer is in that shape. The user may fly for up to 12 hours non-stop, but will suffer exhaustion effects thereafter, losing 1 hit point per turn until he stops and rests for 3-6 hours.

When in eagle form, the user of the ring retains his normal hit points, intelligence and wisdom scores, and psionic abilities (if any). He cannot cast spells (although the memory of spells already learned or prayed for is not affected) and can use no weapons other than the eagle's claw and beak attacks. The user has all the physical and combat abilities of a giant eagle, including superb vision (same effect as wearing *eyes of the eagle*). The eagle's armor class cannot be improved by any magical device; a *ring of protection* slipped on a claw, for example, has no effect.

If the user of the ring drops to less than half of his full normal hit points, any attempt to *shapechange* using the power of the ring will fail until the user recovers enough hit points to bring him back above half of his normal amount. This applies whether the user is in eagle form or in his normal form.

If the user stays in eagle form for longer than 24 hours at one time, there is a cumulative 1% chance per day thereafter, for as long as the eagle form is maintained without interruption, that the ring's powers will "short out," rendering the ring powerless and worthless and causing the wearer to remain in eagle form permanently unless a *wish* is used to restore the wearer to his original form.

Experience Point Value: 1000

Gold Piece Sale Value: 5000

Ring of the Grasshopper

by David Baldwin

While wearing this ring, a character weighing up to 250 lbs. can *jump* (as per the magic-user spell) once per turn for a number of times per day equal to his strength score. (A strength of 18, with or without an exceptional rating, will allow for 18 *jumps* per day.) If the wearer of a *ring of the grasshopper* attempts to *jump* more often than allowed by his strength, he must save vs. paralyzation each time he lands. Failure to save indicates that he suffers leg injuries, causing 5-8 points of damage and reducing the victim's movement rate to 3". A character injured in this manner will find running, leaping, and other strenuous activity involving the legs to be impossible for 6-36 hours afterward, unless a *heal* spell is applied to neutralize the ill effects.

Experience Point Value: 1000

Gold Piece Sale Value: 5000



Ring of Truth

by Douglas A. Lent

Most often found in the form of an unadorned band of copper or silver, this ring is a scourge to all forms of deception. The ring allows its wearer to *detect lie* automatically and also acts as a *true seeing* spell up to three times per day upon the wearer's mental command.

The ring has certain side effects that may manifest themselves upon the wearer. Any character wearing the *ring of truth* cannot knowingly lie or participate in a deception without immediately suffering 1d4 points of damage and having his vocal cords paralyzed for 1-10 rounds, rendering the character mute for that length of time. Also, if the wearer is a spellcaster, any illusion/phantasm spells cast while the ring is worn will automatically fail.

Experience Point Value: 1500

Gold Piece Sale Value: 5000

Rods, staves, and wands

Rod of Many Things

by Andrew Dewar

In its inactive state, a *rod of many things* appears to be a featureless shaft of silver, 3 feet long and 1 inch in diameter. An *identify* spell will reveal that this device can be commanded to form itself into numerous other items, but the spell will not reveal what shapes can be assumed or the means of getting the rod to take on those shapes.

In truth, all that is required to cause the rod to take on a particular shape is a specific mental command naming the desired object. The wielder of the rod can also issue a general command for the rod to "do something," which will cause the rod to shape itself into one of the forms given on the following table. (This often happens when a new owner is trying to figure out what the rod can do.)

Every time the *rod of many things* assumes a certain shape, the owner of the rod will thereafter be able to "call up" that particular item by name. The owner may use guesswork to find out if a certain shape is possible, and if he guesses right the desired object will take form. If a specific guess names an item that the rod is incapable of forming itself into, the wielder must save vs. spell or suffer 2-12 points of electrical shock damage.

It is possible for one owner to pass down information to a new owner about what a *rod of many things* can or cannot do. If a rod is offered for sale along with an extensive list of shapes it can assume, the gold piece sale value would be increased by a significant amount over the base figure given at the end of this description.

Because the rod is made of pure silver, any weapon shape it forms into can be used to attack monsters that are vulnerable to silver weapons. Though weapons "created" by use of the rod have no bonuses "to hit" or damage, they can be used to attack any creature hit only by a weapon of +1 or better. The user will suffer a penalty "to hit" if attempting to use a weapon-shape with which he has no proficiency. All class restrictions on weapons still apply, too; for instance, a cleric could make a *rod of many things* into a dagger (or any other edged weapon) to cut a rope, but could not use the dagger in combat.

The rod will retain any shape it is formed into until the wielder issues a mental command for it to change back to its inactive state. The rod cannot change directly from one shape into another, and any attempt to command it to do so will have no effect. (A treasure hoard might contain a weapon or other item that is actually a *rod of many things* "in disguise," having been changed to a certain form but then separated from its owner before being commanded to change back.)

Possible objects:

Dice roll	Item formed	Dice roll	Item formed
01-04	Axe, hand	51	Jo stick
05-06	Broom	52-53	Lance, light
07	Bo stick	54-57	Mace, footman's
08-09	Cable, 50' long	58	Needle
10	Candlestick holder	59-61	Oar
11	Club	62	Pick, military, footman's
12-13	Crowbar	63-65	Poker, fireplace
14-16	Dagger	66-67	Pole, 10' long
17-19	Dart	68-69	Scimitar
20-21	Flail, footman's	70-71	Spade
22-24	Fork (for dining)	72-75	Spear
25-27	Fork, hay	76-78	Staff, quarter
28-30	Fork, military	79-80	Sword, bastard
31-32	Guisarme	81-83	Sword, broad
33-36	Halberd	84-89	Sword, long
37-41	Hammer	90-93	Sword, short
42-46	Hoe	94-95	Sword, P-handed
47-48	Hoof pick	96-98	Trident
49-50	Javelin	99-00	Toothpick

Experience Point Value: 7500

Gold Piece Sale Value: 25,000

Staff of Spell Focusing

by Richard Lucas

This staff aids in the casting of a magic-user's or illusionist's spells, and makes the magic more effective if the spell is cast successfully. It must be held in the caster's left hand throughout the casting of the spell, whether or not the magic requires a somatic component. (Any gestures requiring movement of the left hand are automatically modified by the staff if necessary.)

When properly employed, the *staff of spell focusing* causes the target(s) of a spell to suffer a -4 penalty on the saving throw against the magic, if a saving throw is normally allowed. If the spell does not allow a saving throw, the duration of its effect is increased by 50% of the normal time. This effect does not apply to spells with a non-specific duration or to those that have a permanent duration.

Each use of the staff, for either purpose, expends one charge from the item. It can be recharged. If the holder of the staff tries to enhance a spell that cannot be affected (such as *hallucinatory terrain*, which allows no saving throw and has a non-specific duration), the staff simply fails to function and a charge is not wasted.

The *staff of spell focusing* can only be used in this manner by a magic-user or illusionist. It can be wielded as a weapon by characters able to employ a quarterstaff, but grants no combat bonuses and has no magical properties.

Experience Point Value: 6000

Gold Piece Sale Value: 25,000

Miscellaneous magic

Amulet of Protection from Sleep

by Richard Lucas

When worn on a chain or cord around one's neck, this object prevents its wearer from falling into any sort of sleep, whether normal or induced magically. The wearer is always alert under its influence, and cannot be affected by a *sleep* spell, potions or poisons that cause sleep, the *sleep* gaze of a jackalwere, or any other item or procedure that causes sleep or drowsiness.

The *amulet of protection from sleep* can be worn as long as desired. However, after three days of continuous use, the wearer will begin to have mild and infrequent hallucinations. This effect increases in intensity and frequency on each day thereafter until, after seven straight days of sleeplessness, the user will contract a form of insanity, as determined by a roll of 1d6: 1 = dementia praecox, 2 = delusional insanity, 3 = schizophrenia, 4 = paranoia, 5 or 6 = hallucinatory insanity. (See the DMG, pp. 83-84, for definitions of these terms.) The hallucinations will stop immediately if the amulet is taken off before seven straight days of use, but if the wearer is stricken by insanity, this condition will persist until removed by a *heal*, *restoration*, or *wish* spell, or similar magic. If the amulet is worn for ten consecutive days, the wearer will die as soon as the tenth day has passed. No magical cures will offset this effect, and the character can only be brought back to life by a *raise dead*, *resurrection*, or *wish* spell.

The amulet does not provide a substitute for sleep, it merely postpones the need for it. A character who goes without sleep by using the amulet will eventually have to make up for this deficiency. In making up lost sleep, a character need not always sleep one hour for every hour he has missed; instead, only one half-hour of "makeup sleep" is required for each hour missed. This advantage does not apply when the deficit is a full night's sleep (8 hours) or less; in such a case, the lost sleep must be made up on an hour-for-hour basis.

The wearer of the amulet is not penalized for lack of sleep (except by the side effects described above). Lost hit points are regained at the normal rate, as if the character had been getting regular rest; similarly, a spellcaster's ability to study and memorize spells is not impaired by lack of sleep as long as the amulet is worn.

The amulet can be removed at any time, either by the wearer or someone else. If the wearer has lost 16 hours (two nights) of sleep or less when the amulet is removed, he will be able to remain awake on his own for up to one hour thereafter, as long as he is engaging in fairly strenuous physical activity. (No one will drop off to sleep in front of an onrushing dragon, for instance.) If the amulet has been used to postpone sleep for longer than two nights' worth, the former wearer will immediately fall asleep when it is removed, and cannot be awakened by normal means for 1-6 hours thereafter. A *haste* spell or similar magic will restore the character to consciousness (but not provide any *hasting* effects) for the duration of the magic. Until a character has made up for all of his lost sleep, he will fight at -1 "to hit" for every 8 hours of sleep (or any portion thereof) that have not yet been made up.

The amulet may be worn by a member of any character class, and will function continuously and indefinitely without needing to be recharged.

Experience Point Value: 500

Gold Piece Sale Value: 2000

Amulet of Sleeplessness

by Richard Lucas

This magic item exactly resembles an *amulet of protection from sleep*, and when put on it will perform all of the same functions as that item. However, it cannot be removed from the wearer's neck by anything less than a *limited wish* or *alter reality* spell.

Experience Point Value: Nil

Gold Piece Sale Value: 1000

Arrow of Charming

by David Baldwin

An item often made by clerics of Aphrodite (see the DEITIES & DEMIGODS® Cyclopedia), this arrow has a +3 bonus "to hit" but causes no damage to the being struck by it. Any human, demi-human, or humanoid hit by an *arrow of charming* will be affected as if the one who fired the arrow had cast a *charm person* spell. The feelings of the *charmed* figure will develop quickly into infatuation and then love if the one who fired the missile is of the same race or species and the opposite sex. No saving throw is allowed at first against this effect, though the *charm* will wear off over time (see the Players Handbook description of the druid spell *charm person* or *mammal*). A *detect charm* spell will note this device's influence, and a *dispel magic* successfully cast against 12th-level magic will remove the *charm*.

The arrow only affects creature types that are susceptible to a *charm person* spell (see the expanded list in DRAGON® issue #90). It can only be used once; upon "hitting" a target, the arrow disappears. If the arrow misses its intended target, it will vanish without hitting a different figure. If it is fired at and hits a creature that cannot be *charmed* by it, the arrow disappears with no effect, just as if it had missed the target.

An *arrow of charming* is always red in color, with a heart-shaped arrowhead. Note that other sorts of magical arrows may strongly resemble this one. An *arrow of charming* is always found singly.

Experience Point Value: 800

Gold Piece Sale Value: 2000

Bracers of Attraction

by Bill Birdsall and Bob Reitmann

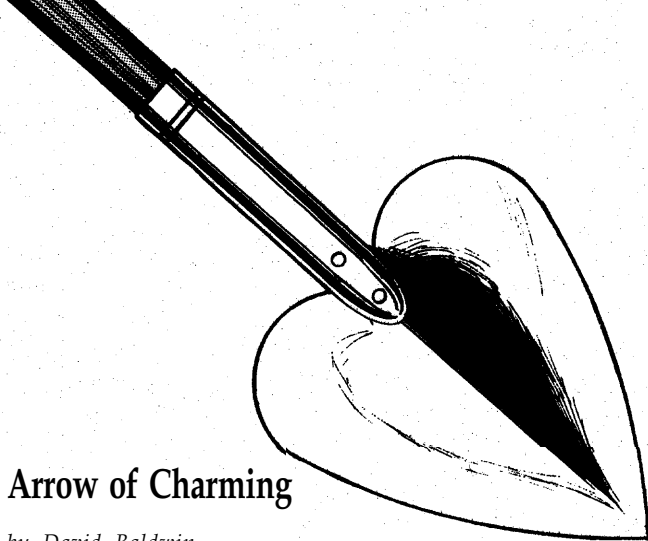
These arm guards appear to be normal bracers, although they radiate magic, and will be revealed as *bracers of defense* (AC 2) by any identification attempt. Any character who puts them on, however, will find his wrists drawn together irresistibly until the *bracers of attraction* are stuck to each other. Under such a condition, it is impossible to successfully cast a spell that has a somatic component; any attempt to do so will simply result in the spell being ruined and wasted. Fighting can be done, but with some difficulty: the wearer suffers a -2 penalty on all rolls "to hit" and on damage for as long as the bracers are stuck together.

The bracers can be separated if the wearer makes a successful bend bars roll, and will remain apart for 1-4 rounds thereafter. Whether the bend bars attempt succeeds or not, another such roll cannot be made until 1 turn has passed. When they are stuck together, the bracers can be removed by any other character with a strength of 18 or greater; when apart, either the wearer or another character can remove them, and only a strength of 16 is required.

If the *bracers of attraction* are not removed physically, they can only be taken off after the casting of a *remove curse* spell from a cleric of 10th level or higher, or by a *limited wish*, *alter reality* or *wish* spell. The bracers retain their cursed nature even after being removed (either physically or magically), and they provide no armor class benefit.

Experience Point Value: Nil

Gold Piece Sale Value: 1000

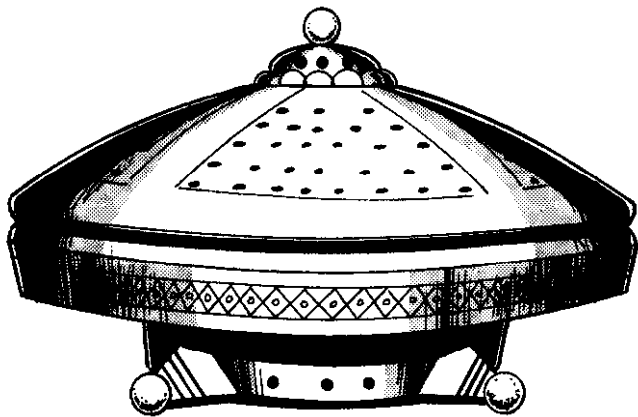


Bracers of the Merman

by Roger E. Moore

These devices will allow the wearer to swim at a constant speed of 18" for up to 6 hours once per day, and at a speed of 12" indefinitely. The bracers also confer *water breathing* upon the wearer for an indefinite period. They do not, however, allow one to use fire or wield weapons underwater as one could on the surface. The bracers appear to be ordinary wrist guards or arm guards; they contain no engraving or other elaborate decoration. As with all magical bracers, both must be worn by the same character for their magic to work.

Experience Point Value: 2000
Gold Piece Sale Value: 4500



Censer of Thaumaturgy

by Ed Greenwood

This perforated metal vessel is typically (75%) made of electrum, but may be formed of any precious metal. If it is filled with incense and the contents are lit, the vapors from the incense will permeate a 1" radius after 1 round and increase by 1" per round thereafter until reaching a 7" radius limit after the seventh round.

The effect of the vapors depends on what sort of character or creature ignited the incense (which may be someone other than the owner of the *censer*). If the lighting was done by a member of a spellcasting class or a creature with spell-like abilities, all magic-user spells cast by someone who is within the vapors are treated as if cast by a magic-user of 18th level. If the lighting is done by a character or creature with no spellcasting or innate spell-like abilities, then all magic-user spells cast by someone within the vapors will take effect as if cast by a character of 5th level. A ranger or paladin who has obtained spell abilities because of high level is considered a spell-caster for purposes of this determination.

All forms of magic that are equivalent to any magic-user spell (such as a monster's innate spell-like abilities or druid, illusionist, or cleric spells that directly duplicate magic-user spells) are affected by the magic of the *censer of thaumaturgy*. Psionic powers, magic items, and other magical or magic-like effects are not altered.

The "high-level" effect of the censer's magic will give any spell cast the range, duration, and effectiveness that would be afforded to a magic-user of 18th level, but does not allow the casting of any spell the caster did not already possess. The "low-level" version of the magic will limit the spells usable within the vapors to magic that is available to a 5th-level caster; in other words, nothing higher than a 3rd-level spell can be successfully cast. Any attempt to use a spell of 4th level or higher will simply fail, and the spell will be wasted. As with the "high-level" version, no caster can use a spell to which he would not normally be entitled.

The censer will burn for 3-12 turns unless deliberately extinguished. A *gust of wind* spell, the approach of a wind walker, or the presence of similar air currents which markedly affect the vapors will disperse them and end the effect. When the censer goes out or is extinguished, the vapors persist for 1-4 rounds thereafter before losing their power.

Experience Point Value: 2500
Gold Piece Sale Value: 12,000

Cloak of Guarding

by Ed Greenwood

This garment is identical in weight, texture, and appearance to a normal woolen cloak, and is typically gray in color. When it is worn and the user is struck by a physical blow, the cloak will instantly become rigid at the point of impact, deflecting all non-magical missiles and absorbing some of the force from any other physical attack (-2 on each die of damage, down to a minimum of 1 point of damage per die). After the attack has landed and withdrawn, the cloak will instantly become flexible again. The cloak cannot be torn or otherwise damaged by any physical attack, except under the circumstances described immediately below.

If a *cloak of guarding* is subjected to constriction or sustained pressure (as in a deadfall trap, or caught between two walls that are closing together), the garment will protect the wearer in the manner of a rigid suit of armor until it has suffered 25 hit points of damage, whereupon it will disintegrate. A cloak that is damaged in this fashion will not bestow its powers of protection upon the wearer again until it has "rested" for as many rounds as the number of points of damage it absorbed, or until it is taken off and not worn for at least one round.

The construction of a *cloak of guarding* (which involves metal spun into fine threads) is such that the wearer will take maximum damage — no saving throw permitted — from heat, cold, or electrical attacks of all sorts. The cloak itself will not burn.

Experience Point Value: 1500
Gold Piece Sale Value: 10,000

Dragon's Eye

by Roger E. Moore

A *dragon's eye* appears to be a small multicolored gemstone, perfectly spherical in shape and about 1/2" in diameter. A jeweler will not be able to estimate its worth, and it seems to be made of no known mineral or substance. When held up to the light and closely examined, some specimens of a *dragon's eye* may be seen to have a design within the stone that resembles the silhouette of a dragon in flight (which may be given as a clue to how the item functions).

When cast into the air at the same time a command word is spoken, a *dragon's eye* will vanish in a puff of smoke. In 1-3 rounds, a young adult dragon of random color (without spellcasting abilities) will be *summoned*, appearing 10 feet away from where the character who cast the *dragon's eye* is standing. The dragon will initially be well predisposed to the summoner, and will obey any reasonable commands of the summoner that are spoken in the common tongue. However, the dragon will only remain for a certain period of time before it vanishes forever. The greater the difference between the summoner's alignment and the alignment of the dragon summoned, the less time the dragon will remain. The following table gives the different types of dragons that will be randomly *summoned* by this device:

d20 roll	Dragon color	Alignment
1-2	gold	lawful good
3-4	silver	neutral good
5-6	copper	chaotic good
7-8	brass	chaotic neutral
9-10	red	chaotic evil
11-12	black	neutral evil
13-14	blue	lawful evil
15-16	bronze	lawful neutral
17-20	green	true neutral

Any dragon *summoned* by a *dragon's eye* will remain with the summoner for 6 turns if the alignment of the summoner and the dragon are identical. For every step between the summoner's alignment and that of the dragon, counting the latter but not the former, the duration of the eye's effect is reduced by 1 turn. For example, lawful good is four steps away from chaotic evil: from LG to LN or NG = 1 step; LN or NG to N = 2; N to NE or CN = 3; NE or CN to

CE = 4. Thus, a lawful evil summoner who received a red dragon after casting the eye would have its services for only 2 turns.

The *summoned* dragon will generally behave in a manner consistent with its alignment, unless commanded to do otherwise by the character controlling it. All of these dragons are of average size and have 4 hit points per hit die. They can use their breath weapon, claw, and bite attacks in combat. None of them will have the *fear* aura that dragons gain upon reaching adulthood. Each can detect hidden or *invisible creatures* within a 4" radius. None of these dragons, because of the special nature of their summoning, can be subdued in battle; if commanded to do so, a dragon will fight to the death on behalf of the summoner.

A *dragon's eye* can only be used once. It is 90% likely that only one will be found in any treasure hoard; otherwise, two will be discovered.

Experience Point Value: 3000

Gold Piece Sale Value: 20,000

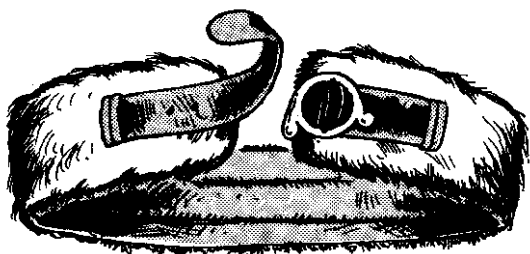
Gauntlets of Heat

by David Baldwin

These gloves are capable of generating heat and fire upon the mental command of the wearer. A set of *gauntlets of heat* is capable of producing the following spell-like powers: The wearer can *produce flame* and *heat metal* six times per day each, and use *burning hands* three times per day. The gauntlets can also be used to ignite up to twelve arrows or crossbow bolts a day, as per the spell *flame arrow*. All spell effects are at the 12th level of ability where determinations of spell level are applicable.

Experience Point Value: 1000

Gold Piece Sale Value: 10,000



Girdle of Lions

by Ed Greenwood

This belt appears to be like any other magical girdle when first encountered. When it is put on, the wearer gains several special abilities. Wearing a *girdle of lions* enables one to *speak with felines* (as per the spell *speak with monsters*). The felines, from house cat to sabertooth tiger, will view the wearer as if he had a charisma of 18 (for purposes of reaction checks). Often the cats will give advice or assistance to the girdle wearer and may obey his commands, if such are reasonable.

The wearer also gains the ability to land after a fall in such a way as to minimize physical damage: subtract 3 points from every die of damage incurred from falling, to a minimum of 1 point of damage per die.

The girdle enables the wearer to *move silently* as per the thief ability, with a minimum 50% chance of success. If the wearer is a thief, assassin, monk, or other character or creature who already has the ability to *move silently*, then the chance of success is adjusted upward by +50%, to a maximum of 99%.

Finally, the girdle confers a sort of night vision similar to that possessed by cats. If any light source is within view of the wearer, he can see in the dark as clearly as if he were in broad daylight. Note that this power is not related to infravision or ultravision; the girdle does not allow someone to see in pitch darkness or detect "light" that lies outside the visible spectrum.

Experience Point Value: 2000

Gold Piece Sale Value: 8000

Goblet of Glory

by Ed Greenwood

This magical container appears as a heavy goblet of worked gold, and is similar in some respects to a *beaker of plentiful potions*. Although it always appears to be empty, the goblet will dispense a clear, glowing liquid when its rim is brought up to the holder's lips and the container is tilted.

Draining the goblet takes 1 round; all of the liquid in a dose must be consumed for it to take effect. During the following round, the liquid affects the drinker as follows: 1d4 hit points of damage that the drinker may have suffered are restored. If the drinker is 12th level or lower, he immediately grows larger (as per a potion of *growth*, but enlargement is only 6' in height) and temporarily gains energy levels in the manner of a potion of *super-heroism*. A member of any character class may receive this last benefit, but the increase in level applies only to physical combat; thieves do not gain improved thieving skills, spellcasters do not gain spell knowledge or comprehension, and clerics do not receive the level benefit when attempting to turn undead.

A character of 13th level or higher who drinks from the goblet will have 1d4 hit points restored, but will not receive the other benefits—and will be *drained* of one level of experience.

The growth and level gains bestowed by the *goblet of glory* will last for 4-16 rounds. The goblet will dispense only 1 dose of the liquid per day, and each such item typically contains only 3-36 draughts. When the last of these doses is drunk, the goblet will crumble into dust.

The liquid cannot be spilled or removed from the goblet except by drinking. If a drinker is hit by a physical or magical attack, or otherwise interrupted, during the round in which he is consuming the liquid, then that dose is wasted and the goblet cannot be used again until the following day.

Experience Point Value: 1250

Gold Piece Sale Value: 12,000

Harrowhelm

by Victor Selby

When first found, this helm appears to be any other sort of normal steel helmet; it radiates magic, however, and faint runes may be seen on the inside rim of the helm. The consecutive casting of *read magic* and *comprehend languages* spells will inform the reader of the general nature of the helm, but not its disadvantages. A bard's *legend lore* ability or a spell such as *identify wish*, or the like will also work in this fashion.

Any non-psionic character who is allowed to wear metallic armor can use this device. The wearer gains the ability to generate a *psionic blast* (attack strength 101 points) up to three times per day, but only once in any single round. The wearer will also find that the helm grants the use of certain psionic disciplines for as long as it is worn. The disciplines granted vary from one *harrowhelm* to another:

01-50: One devotion, usable with 15 strength points per day.

51-85: Two devotions, usable with 30 strength points per day.

86-98: Three devotions, usable with 45 strength points per day.

99-00: Two devotions and one science, usable with 45 strength points per day.

The specific psionic disciplines for a helm may be randomly determined or assigned by the DM. The level of mastery at which these powers operate equals one-half the current wearer's level (or one-half the highest level, if multiclassed), rounding down. Thus, a 1st-level character cannot make any use of this helm beyond *psionic blast* generation until he reaches 2nd level.

The wearer of the *harrowhelm* is also immune to all psionic attacks except for *psionic blast*, but the helm grants a +6 bonus to saving throws against this attack form.

The *harrowhelm* has two disadvantages. First, it attracts the attention of all psionic creatures within a half-mile radius as soon as it is put on (whether or not any of its powers are immediately used). Though it does not necessarily anger such creatures, it will be easy

for these beings to locate and track the helm wearer as long as they stay within this range; they need only concentrate mentally to do this.

The second disadvantage manifests itself when a psionic character puts on the helm. The unfortunate wearer will immediately be attacked by a 100-point strength *mind thrust*. The helm's magic will also neutralize any psionic defense that the attacked character has, so some form of psionic disability may result from this attack (see the DMG, p. 77, Psionic Attack Upon Defenseless Psionic). This attack will be repeated at the start of every subsequent round, though the wearer may remove the helm at any time to prevent more than one attack.

Experience Point Value: 1500 (plus 500 for each discipline)

Gold Piece Sale Value: 15,000 (plus 2500 for each discipline)

Necklace of Bad Taste

by David Baldwin

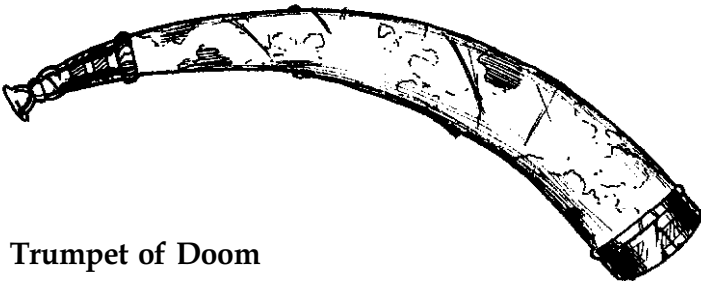
Though sages argue that this item is more correctly called a *necklace of tasting bad*, the common name has stuck. This appears to be a magical necklace of unspecified nature until fastened around someone's neck. Immediately, the necklace causes the wearer to emit a terrible odor from his skin. All characters and most monsters within a 10' radius of the wearer will become so uncomfortable with the smell that they must save vs. poison at +2 or become nauseated and unable to attack or defend themselves for 1-4 rounds. Even if the save is made, those within the 10' radius will suffer a -2 penalty on all "to hit" rolls for as long as they remain in that area.

The real value in owning such a necklace becomes apparent when one is attacked by a monster that bites at prey. The necklace affects any living creature that is native to the Prime Material Plane. If a monster meeting that description bites the wearer of a *necklace of bad taste*, the monster will immediately suffer an attack of nausea (no saving throw) and will be unable to attack again for 2-5 rounds (though the creature can flee at half normal speed). That monster will not again bite the person wearing the necklace, but claw, tail, or missile attacks may be used if such are possible for the attacker.

One of every four of these necklaces are *cursed* so that they cannot be unlocked from the wearer's neck once fastened in place. Only a *wish* will remove a *cursed necklace of bad taste*.

Experience Point Value: 500

Gold Piece Sale Value: 1000



Trumpet of Doom

by Ed Greenwood

This item is a magical horn, similar in appearance to a *horn of valhalla*. Some specimens of this item appear to be battered, a few seemingly about to fall apart. If the *trumpet of doom* is winded, all human, demi-human, and humanoid skeletons and corpses within a 60' radius about the horn will be brought into unlife, as per the spell *animate dead*. All of the undead will obey the bearer of the horn without question, to the utmost of their ability.

The greater the number of undead animated, however, the shorter the time that they will remain active. If only one skeleton or zombie is animated, it will remain active for 60 hours under the horn-bearer's control. If two are animated, they will be active for 30

hours, three will be active for 20 hours, and if 4 or more skeletons and/or zombies are activated, they will be animated for only 10 hours before they collapse again.

The undead created by the *trumpet of doom* may be commanded to "go down!" (at which they will disintegrate into dust) if the user of the horn wishes it; otherwise, the undead will serve until destroyed, dispelled, or their time runs out. Use of a *trumpet of doom* is not considered to be a good act, though sounding it to test its properties is not evil. The *trumpet of doom* may only be sounded once per month. Using it more often will produce no results.

Experience Point Value: 900

Gold Piece Sale Value: 5000

Vision Globe

by Roger E. Moore

This object appears to be a crystal sphere 6 inches in diameter that radiates magic. It may only be used by a psionic character who has one or more of the disciplines listed below. The character can project mental pictures that he receives when using one of these disciplines from his mind into the globe, so that the images will be visible to non-psionic onlookers who look into the globe. The disciplines that this item may be used with include *animal telepathy*, *clairvoyance*, *ESP*, *object reading*, *sensitivity to psychic impressions*, and *telepathy*. Any mental pictures that are received from the mind of a contacted being, or images that show what a location looks like, are depicted in the *vision globe* whenever a psionic character holds the globe in both hands and employs one of the above disciplines. The globe will remain inert if it is held by a character who cannot use it, or if held by a "legal" user who cannot presently employ any of the allowable disciplines (because of a lack of psionic strength points). The *vision globe* can be used as often as desired by any character able to bring out its power.

The *vision globe* will not transmit sound or speech, but can depict words if they come through as mental images (for example, if someone pictures in his mind what the word "dog" looks like, instead of thinking the word "dog" as the label that identifies a mental image of the animal).

Experience Point Value: 750

Gold Piece Sale Value: 3000

Swords

Unless otherwise noted below, 70% of all magical swords are longswords, with the remainder divided between broadswords (20%), short swords (5%), bastard swords (4%), and two-handed swords (1%).

Most magical swords shed light when grasped. This radiance has an infinite duration and needs no "recharging." The light emitted is generally equal to a *light* spell in power and effect. The radius of illumination is 15 feet for short swords, 20 for longswords and broadswords; 25 for bastard swords, and 30 feet for two-handed swords.

Demonbane

by Ed Greenwood

Legend speaks of a great, many-hued blade of which the origin has been forgotten, but which was wielded by the great paladin Nord in his single-handed destruction of the Citadel of Conjurers. It is written that he overthrew succubi and glabrezu "beyond number" with his sword *Demonbane*, and caused the summoned demon-lord Ndulu to flee from this plane. *Demonbane* earned its name in this battle, but its whereabouts now are not known. Nord disappeared shortly after the fall of the citadel, and "not a stone of his keep remained when the sun rose that morning" (or so write the sages).

With *Demonbane* in hand, a warrior is rendered immune to all enchantment/charm spells cast by demons, and gains a +3 bonus on saving throws vs. other magical attacks by demons. The user will

also become unusually alert, and can only be surprised on a 1 in 12 chance.

Demonbane glows with a cold, blue light (equal to a *light* spell in effect) when brought within 60' of a demon, and emits no light at any other time. It can cause a demon's amulet to shatter at a touch (amulet must save vs. *disintegration*).

The weapon is a bastard sword with a +3 bonus "to hit" and on damage normally, improving to +5 when used against demonkind. Only fighters and good-aligned members of lighter subclasses may use this weapon; it will fall immediately from the grasp of anyone else who tries to seize it. Naturally, this sword has earned the utter hatred of all demons and can be identified at a glance by any of them. Anyone using this sword will gain the instant and permanent wrath of all demons who see him, who will communicate the sword's location and ownership to all their fellows.

Experience Point Value: 4000

Gold Piece Sale Value: 20,000

Sword, Cursed Everstriking

by Stephen Martin

An *everstriking sword* always hits an intended target unless an impossible blow is attempted, such as striking at a character who is out of range of all attacks. This weapon has no bonuses to hit or damage. However, a peculiar effect comes into play when such a sword is used in combat.

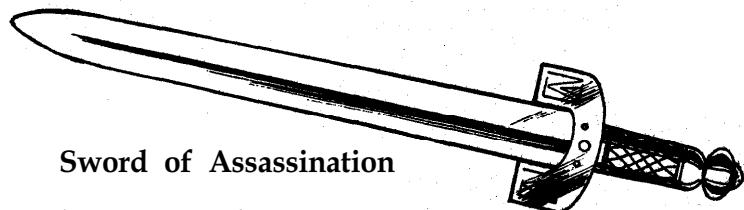
If the sword is swung at an opponent and the die roll indicates that a miss will occur, then the wielder of the sword loses a number of hit points equal to the difference between the failed "to hit" roll and the number needed to hit the target — and the sword *does* hit, in effect using the wielder's own energy to guide the attack home. This energy drain will be felt as a sudden, sharp pain coupled with a feeling of exhaustion.

If the sword is used against a creature that can only be hit by magical weapons, it will drain an extra set of hit points for every "plus" normally required to hit such a monster — double the amount against a creature hit only by +1 weapons, three times the amount against a creature hit only by +2 weapons, and so forth. Regardless of the number of hit points needed to make its attack hit, this sword always does only normal damage for whatever type of sword it is, with a damage bonus for strength added if applicable.

Any character who uses this sword once in combat will be *cursed* to always draw the sword in any further combat, and will ignore all other weapons that he carries in favor of this one. This curse can only be removed by a *wish* or an *exorcise* spell, and the sword must be discarded immediately thereafter.

Experience Point Value: 800

Gold Piece Sale Value: 1000



Sword of Assassination

by Bruce E. Wright

The *sword of assassination*, also known as the *ruby sword*, is a potent weapon in the hands of an assassin. If handled by any other type of character, the sword appears to be (and can be used as) a regular blade. Most (60%) of these swords are shortswords, and the remainder are either longswords (30%) or broadswords (10%). All swords of this type have a ruby of not less than 500 gp value mounted on the pommel; hence their secondary name.

When used by an assassin character, a *sword of assassination* gives

the wielder a bonus "to hit" and on damage and adds a bonus onto all assassination rolls attempted while using the weapon. The power of a certain sword is determined randomly:

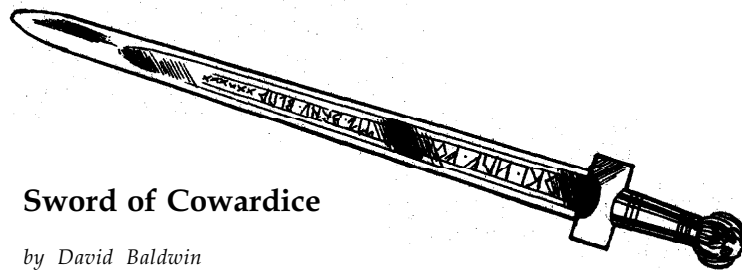
d% roll	Bonus "to hit" and damage	Bonus on assassination
01-60	+1	+5%
61-90	+2	+10%
91-95	+3	+15%
96-99	+4	+20%
00	+5	+25%

The bonus on assassination is only gained if the assassin has a chance of assassinating his victim. Thus, the sword would give no chance for an assassination roll to a 3rd-level assassin trying to slay a 12th-level victim — but the assassin *would* gain the sword's combat bonuses.

A *sword of assassination* has the same chances to be intelligent as any other magical sword, and will always have an evil alignment if intelligence is indicated. Intelligent swords of this sort will never betray their nature to any non-assassin.

Experience Point Value: 800 per "plus" of sword

Gold Piece Sale Value: 2000 per "plus" of sword



Sword of Cowardice

by David Baldwin

Developed by certain gods of mischief, notably Loki (see the DEITIES & DEMIGODS Cyclopedia), this weapon is a magical sword of +5 power with a pommel formed in the shape of an animal, monster, or human head. The sword is capable of speech, with a minimum intelligence of 14 and special abilities as determined by the charts in the DMG.

This wonderful weapon, however, has also been infused with a cowardly personality. The first time it is swung at an opponent in combat, the sword's head-shaped pommel will shriek in terror and cry for help. The noise will attract all wandering monsters within a 12" radius. The sword will continue to yell and cry for 2-12 turns unless a silence spell is cast upon it.

The sword will also attempt to avoid combat, twisting in the user's hands. The holder must make a successful roll to open doors at the start of every combat round, or else the sword twists out of the user's grasp and falls to the floor, still shrieking. If the user can hold onto the weapon, he may wield it normally during that round, with all appropriate bonuses to hit and damage.

Some of these swords are so timid that even being brought within sighting distance of a non-human monster will cause them to start shrieking. Though these swords are not *cursed* to remain with a particular owner, they are often regarded as too valuable to dispose of (how many +5 swords does one find?) and are kept despite their disadvantages.

Experience Point Value: 2000

Gold Piece Sale Value: 10,000

Sword of Insanity

by David Baldwin

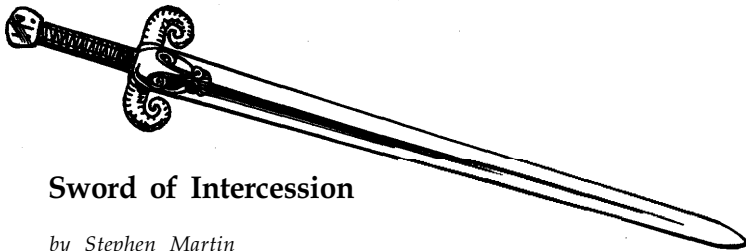
This sword functions as a +1 weapon and is never intelligent. On any modified roll "to hit" of 20 or higher, the sword generates an energy field around its blade that causes any non-psionic creature that it strikes to suffer an effect similar to that caused by a *psionic*

blast attack, producing temporary confusion or insanity. Non-psionic beings so struck will be affected as per the table on p. 78 of the DMG, with the being's combined wisdom and intelligence scores determining the weapon's effects. Note that insane beings, those with more than 6 hit dice, and those who are immune to psionic attack (such as Class VI psionics from the DEITIES & DEMIGODS Cyclopedia) cannot be so affected.

If a psionic being is struck with this sword and a score of 20 or greater is achieved on the "to hit" roll, the being suffers a *psionic blast* attack of 100 strength points. The sword cannot be psionically attacked in return.

Experience Point Value: 700

Gold Piece Sale Value: 3500



Sword of Intercession

by Stephen Martin

This magical weapon is a holy (or unholy) sword that always has an alignment and a patron deity. A character of any different alignment may wield a *sword of intercession*, but it will function as a normal, nonmagical weapon. A character of the same alignment as the sword may wield it as a +2 weapon. A character who worships the sword's patron deity may wield it as a +4 sword, and in addition gains a 5% magic resistance and a +2 bonus on all saving throws so long as the sword is held or carried. Such a character will also be able to *commune* with his deity once per week, asking one yes-or-no question at that time. The sword will not work for those who have only converted to their new alignment or religion within the last year.

Experience Point Value: 1000

Gold Piece Sale Value: 5000

Sword of Night, +1

by Stephen Martin

Though most magical swords shed *light*, a *sword of night*, also known as a *black sword*, sheds *darkness*. The sword's wielder determines the radius of the sphere of *darkness* given off by the sword; it can be from 5' to 25', in 5-foot increments. Within this radius, all creatures but the sword's wielder will be unable to see and will suffer a -4 penalty "to hit" on their attacks, as well as losing any armor class bonus for dexterity. Infravision and ultravision are similarly useless within this radius. The sword's user may see normally in all respects, however, and can use the sword as a +1 weapon "to hit" and on damage.

This sword can also cause *fear* in all creatures within the *darkness* who fail a saving throw vs. spell (with wisdom bonuses applicable). This *fear* power is generated at the wielder's unspoken command,

and may be produced up to three times per day. Creatures affected by the *fear* will move away from the *darkness* at full speed for 2-7 rounds.

A *light* spell cast at the sword will negate all of its powers (except for its +1 combat bonus) for one round per level of the caster, if the sword fails to save vs. lightning (as hard metal). A *continual light* spell negates the *darkness* powers for twice as long, and the save against it is made at a -3 penalty.

Experience Point Value: 700

Gold Piece Sale Value: 3500

Miscellaneous weapons

Dagger of Alignment Detection

by Robert Tussey

This weapon appears to be a well-made dagger with live small gems set in the hilt. It radiates magic. When a command word is spoken and the dagger is pointed casually in the direction of a person or object within 30' one or more of the jewels will glow to indicate the alignment of the creature or thing (such as a magic sword) pointed at. The usual code such daggers use is as follows: emerald = good, diamond = neutral, ruby = evil, topaz = chaotic, and sapphire = lawful. Thus, the emerald and sapphire set in an *alignment dagger* will glow if it is pointed at a lawful good character.

The target to be identified must be visible to the holder of the dagger. The weapon's "aim" is not especially accurate; if it is pointed in the general direction of more than one creature or object of different alignments, the gems will glow alternately in rapid succession, making their message difficult to interpret. The *alignment dagger* is a normal weapon in all other respects, giving the holder no combat bonuses.

Experience Point Value: 100

Gold Piece Sale Value: 600

Dagger +1/+2 vs. Dolphins

by Roger E. Moore

Found only in undersea lairs, this weapon is a coral or shark-tooth dagger made by powerful sahuagin priests. These daggers have a lawful evil alignment, and anyone of another alignment will find that such daggers function as -1 *cursed* weapons when used by them.

Experience Point Value: 100

Gold Piece Sale Value: 1000

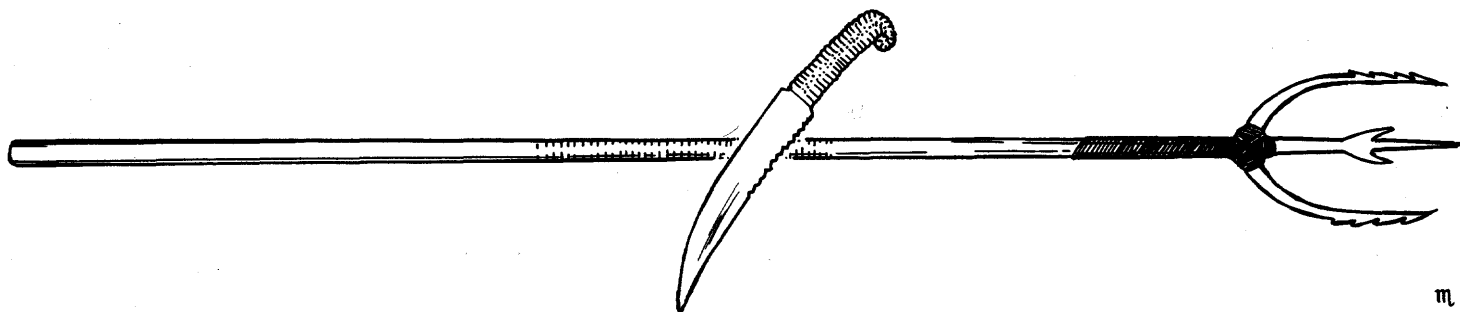
Trident +1/+2 vs. Water Elementals

by Roger E. Moore

Another item manufactured by the most powerful sahuagin clerics, this weapon gives its wielder combat bonuses against creatures like tritons, water weirds, and water elementals. As with the *dagger +1/+2 vs. dolphins* above, this weapon has a lawful evil alignment and will function as a -1 weapon in the hands of anyone of another alignment. Only the most powerful sahuagin warriors carry these tridents.

Experience Point Value: 800

Gold Piece Sale Value: 10,000



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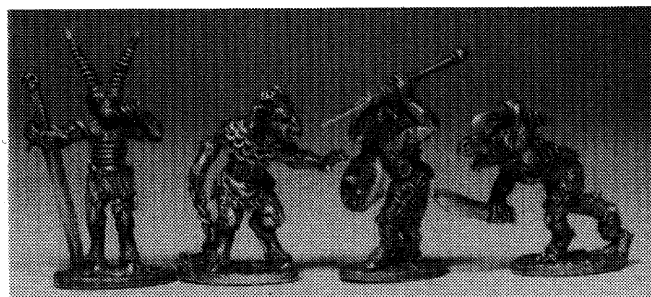
AND THE WINNERS ARE . . .

The winners in this month's installment of the RAL'S RICHES prize giveaway have been officially drawn, with Ral himself supervising the selection. Ral's lucky winners this month are:

FIRST PRIZE: Robin D. Barnhart, Trinway, Ohio
(Robin, who buys her Ral Partha products at The Book Stall in Zanesville, Ohio, will receive a rare limited-edition Ral Partha Imperial Dragon. It's not available anywhere else!)

Second Prize: Kathryn Pierce, Honolulu, Hawaii
(Kathryn buys her Ral Partha products at The Hobby Company in neighboring Alea, Hawaii. She will receive a gift certificate good for \$50.00 worth of Ral Partha merchandise.)

Remember, there are five more drawings left in the Ral's Riches contest, and plenty of opportunity for you to get your share of the richest Ral is clearly bent on distributing the wealth, and you can hardly deny him. Ask your local hobby dealer for details!



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Duck, Dark Troll



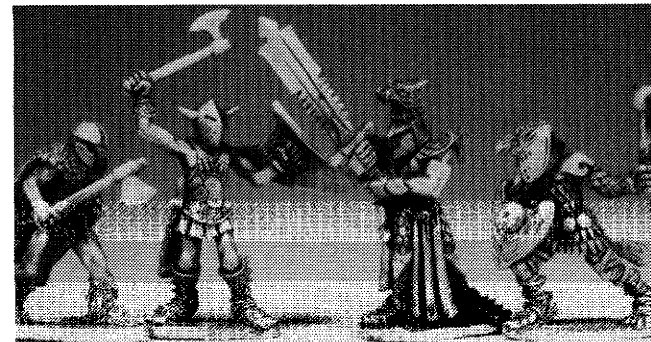
Minotaur

Wraith



01-125 Champion of Chaos

01-126 Lord of Chaos



01-124 Warriors of Chaos

Spies' advice

Clearing up TOP SECRET® game queries

by Penny Petticord

Do the agents in assassination (Section 00) have a license to kill? If they do, there should never be a police investigation, correct?

Agents of Section 00 are of course licensed to kill by their own agencies. However, local law enforcement agencies are not as a rule expected to recognize this. Should a 00 agent be careless enough to provide the local police force with sufficient evidence for investigation and/or arrest, the agency may or may not choose to provide assistance. In most cases, the necessity for maintaining absolute secrecy about agency involvement in such a crime will preclude any offers of assistance. (In fact, some agencies if questioned will not only deny any knowledge of the agent, they may even swear that there is no Assassination Bureau in the organization at all.) The agent must consider himself on his own in such matters unless direct communication from his Administrator informs him otherwise.

In the rules, you explain that no agent can be "super," which is only for NPCs, but you say that primary traits have no advancement limits. So a person playing with a Physical Strength of 172 would be super. Please explain.

The rulebook for the TOP SECRET Game (2nd edition) explains on page 10 that "no player character can be in the 'super' rating *initially*" (that is, at first level). Experienced characters may certainly increase some of their traits beyond 100 and enter this category.

Why are there no damage modifiers for rifles? An M-16 is going to do a lot more penetration than a .22 Beretta. Do you intend to change the rule that both guns do the same damage, or have you already done so? Do you think an assault rifle does the same damage as a .22?

An assault rifle has a 14-16% stopping power modifier. ("Stopping power" is the ability of certain types of weapons and ammunition to incapacitate an opponent.) Tumbling bullets, such as the .223 caliber round from an M-16, add +2 to damage.

How much damage does a flamethrower inflict?

A backpack-style flamethrower is connected by hose to a pistol-sized flamegun which can be kept in a hip holster. The fuel can be ejected lit or unlit. The 4½-gallon tank holds enough fuel for twenty bursts of one second duration each. The fuel may be fired all at once or in any number of multiple bursts adding up to 20. One burst will burn for 2 minutes at a temperature of 1200°C. Any unprotected person hit by the flame will suffer an automatic 30 points of damage and will be considered on fire for the next 2 minutes.

How much do arrows and crossbow bolts cost?

Arrows cost \$1 apiece; crossbow bolts cost \$2 apiece.

What is the .22 Galil? I have found Galil assault rifles in .223 and 7.62, but not in .22 as you describe it. Why is the Galil so accurate in your game? The actual Israeli Galil is a 5.56 mm full automatic assault rifle. Is your .22 a modified version of the above (much like the .22 rimfire adaptation of the M-16)?

The .22 Galil semi-automatic rifle on the TOP SECRET Weapons chart is actually a 5.56 weapon (caliber: .223 inches). The

Galil is so accurate because that's the way its statistics fit best into the TOP SECRET game rules for gun design.

On page 20 under "Automatic Weapons," it says that an M3 submachine gun can fire 5 shots/second; under the "Weapons Chart," it is stated that it can fire 4 shots/second. Which figure is correct?

The Weapons Chart is correct; the M3 submachine gun can fire only 4 shots/second.

What are the statistics for the M60 light machine gun, M14 assault rifle, MP56 submachine gun, 81mm M29 mortar, 107mm M30 mortar, 105mm M102 howitzer, Redeye shoulder-fired missile, rifle grenade launchers, M60 tank, Patton tank, Sherman tank, Panzer tank, M1 tank, and Northrop F-5 Freedom Fighter?

The TOP SECRET game is not a military role-playing game. Official statistics on military ordnance are not available.

My assassin finds it difficult to kill a large target with one bullet, even with the optional "Called Shots" rule. Why aren't there any "mortal wounds" provisions in the TOP SECRET game as there are in the BOOT HILL® game?

I am not certain what you mean by a "large target." But if you are saying, for example, that you want to kill an enemy agent with one bullet, remember that he is probably at least as good as you are. If you could kill him with one shot, he could do the same to you if circumstances were reversed. Besides, it just isn't that easy to kill a PC or NPC who has the superior training and skills of an agent. Perhaps if you tried a surprise attack with a projectile weapon, you might have a better chance for a quick kill.

On page 33, there is a chart of weapons with accompanying HTH values. But when these are compared with the "Injury Modifiers" on page 28, it can be seen that everything but a sword, knife, or axe will do precisely the same amount of extra damage. Do you mean that being hit with a purse (HWV = 3) hurts as much as being hit with an oar (HWV = 15)? According to the table on page 28 they both do +1 damage. Is this chart on page 33 a misprint?

Your powers of observation are excellent. You have pointed out an oversight in the

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agency's policy revisions. To clarify: There was once a time in the history of the organization (1st edition rulebook) when the HWV values detailed on the table now found on page 33 affected the ability to hit. In the 2nd edition rulebook, the rules for hitting were revised and adjusted, and the HWV values now only affect damage. However, the table in question was carried over unchanged, and it was not noted that all weapons therein would give the same amount of extra damage. For the time being, use the table as is. More on this at a later date.

My Administrator says that if you have low intelligence (e.g. 26-40), you cannot understand hand signals; I disagree. Could you give a ruling on this?

A system of hand signals may, at the option of your Admin, be considered as a separate language because it requires some training to use and understand. Therefore, if an agent's Knowledge Value enables him to know any other languages in addition to his native tongue, he should be able to learn hand signals. According to the text, an agent with a Knowledge Value of 26-50 may know a maximum of 2 languages (1 plus native). Simply count "hand signals" as your other language.

What would be the percentage for being ambidextrous?

At this time, there is no official provision

for agents to be ambidextrous. However, it is a good idea. Therefore, Admins wishing to allow for this within their own agencies may consider permitting it on a roll of 00 (1% chance).

If the Surprise Value and First Shot Values are the same for two agents, who gets the first shot?

In the rare case when two combatants have identical Surprise Values and Net Speeds, firing will occur simultaneously. Both shots will have full effect if they hit, and it would be quite conceivable that the combatants could kill each other.

If someone attacks you with a sword, what defense do you use if you have no sword? None?

Yes. "None" is the only possible defense in Swordplay for a totally unarmed person. It is the strong recommendation of this office that upon finding himself in such a situation, the agent should initiate Possession Combat for the weapon at the earliest opportunity — whether he knows how to use it or not — to take it away from the opponent.

If you are on a mission and you kill an NPC (agent), but that wasn't your mission, what listing on the Table of Missions would the Admin use for experience — "Killing Arms Bearers?"

Yes. Experience would have to be taken from the bottom part of the Table of Missions, entitled "Various Unassigned Missions." The only pertinent entry there is "Killing Arms Bearers."

Can any PC or NPC (agent) use Untrained Combat even if they don't have

any AOK in Physical Education or Military Science? On page 7 of the 2nd edition rules it says in the last paragraph of the "Areas of Knowledge" section that all AOKs will have a rating score equal to one-half of the PC's or NPC's primary Knowledge score. So everybody knows at least Untrained Combat and Knife Fighting Combat (according to Military Science) for characters and at least Untrained Combat for NPCs, correct?

Since Untrained Combat requires a minimum Physical Education AOK of 0 or a minimum Military Science AOK of 0, any person may use it in Hand-to-Hand combat. That is what "untrained" means. As for Knife Fighting, it requires a Physical Education AOK of 35 or a Military Science AOK of 25. Therefore, many agents will have this skill, although not all.

In the module "Sprechenhaltestelle," you say that the PCs and NPCs can be chosen out of the "Players' List of Potential Characters." How can these be first level if their Personal Traits and Secondary Personal Traits are over first level (over 100)? How should they be used?

The Players' List of Potential Characters in "Sprechenhaltestelle" does contain characters whose traits are over 100. It also contains a few of our considerably less exciting agents. All of these characters are to be played at first level of experience in their respective bureaus. Players are given a brief description of each at the start of the game, and then they must make an essentially blind choice. If you are fortunate enough to choose one of the superior ones, then congratulations! You have a first level character the likes of which you are not likely to see again. Play it well.

It looks good. . .

(From page 2)

important as the people who read it. We moved the small "legal type" from this page to the bottom of page 4, since it isn't exactly what we consider exciting reading.

"Out on a Limb" is no more. That identifying line outlived its usefulness when we started "The forum," and we've been intending to change the name of our letters column for a long time. Now it's just "Letters," which may not sound as exciting but is certainly a lot more accurate. "The forum" remains, and now both of those columns are adorned with the same style of header — a motif that we'll extend to other regular elements of the magazine in the issues to come.

What do you get, besides a snazzier-looking contents page? You get one more column of letters in every issue, because we eliminated the column where I used to write about that issue's articles and features. The new format removes the need for that kind of column. To put it mildly, I'm not too broken up about only having to write one column instead of two — and I suspect you won't miss the "extra" column either.

We've been trying to devote more space to letters from readers, because we know you enjoy them, whether they're letters with questions ("Letters") or letters with opinions ("The forum"). We haven't always succeeded in this effort, but maybe this new design will provide a push to keep things headed in the right direction.

I don't have to say this, because I know you will anyway, but please let us know what you think of the new design. We enjoy hearing when we've done something right — and even if we don't enjoy it, we also want to hear when we've done something wrong.

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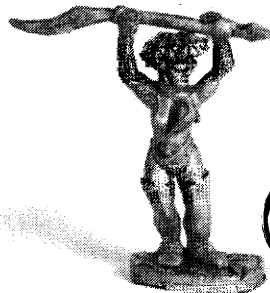
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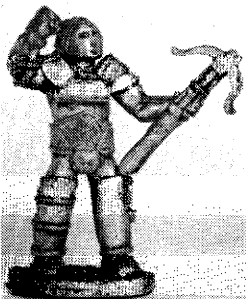
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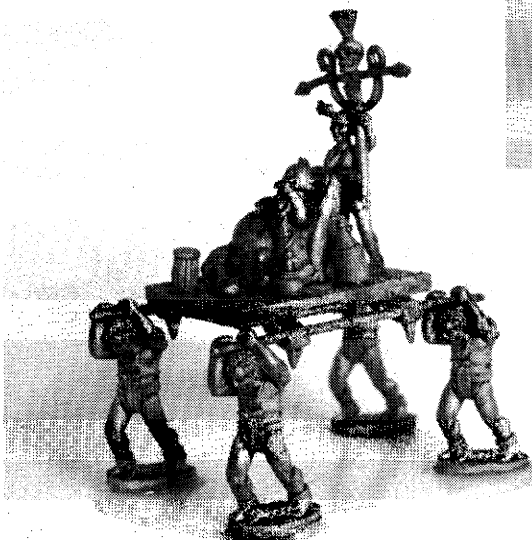


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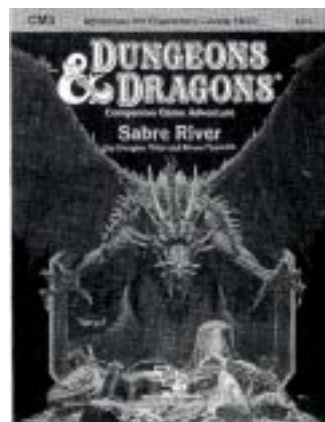


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New equipment for GAMMA WORLD® gaming.



ON THE COVER

Larger than a UPFS battleship, the robot warship *Juggernaut* launches its fighters and prepares to blast the Yazirian world of Hakosoar into ruin. Will Strike Force NOVA stop it in time? See "Day of the Juggernaut" on page 74 and find out. Cover art by Jeff Butler.

This editorial will serve as a clearing house for an assortment of corrections, announcements, and so forth. To begin with, the corrections.

"Of Grizzly Bears and Chimpanzees" (DRAGON® Magazine issue #89) had several minor errors. The special attacks for bears and big cats were left off, for one thing. (Bears can hug for 4d4 damage, and big cats can rake for 2d8 damage.) Also, copy was dropped on p. 76 in the section on primates; the phrase "heavy pistol one" should read "heavy pistol or carbine."

"Car Wars," contrary to the tiny print on p. 64 in issue #89, is a trademark of Texas Instruments, Inc., *not* of Steve Jackson Games. "Truck Stop," "Autoduel," and "Sunday Drivers" are trademarks of Steve Jackson Games. Apologies for the error are offered to all.

Announcements: The MARVEL®—Phile has become the most popular feature of the entire ARES™ Section, judging from our mail. We're keeping a tally on the most requested characters to appear in the column from the Marvel Universe; be warned, however, that some characters have already been covered in modules and some cannot be covered at all (like heroes from other comics companies). Jumpin' Jeff promised a column on the Heralds of GALACTUS™ in the near future. . . .

Finally, we say goodbye to two people who have helped the ARES Section and DRAGON Magazine enormously during the time that they worked with us. Mary Parkinson did a superb job as our advertising coordinator, and Marilyn Favaro worked tirelessly in our production department, piecing our copy together into coherent and professional form. They will both be greatly missed, and all of us at Dragon Publishing wish them the best.

The editors

ARES™ Section 91 THE SCIENCE-FICTION GAMING SECTION

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"Does anyone here speak Aslan?"

Language skills in TRAVELLER® gaming by Joseph Benedetto, Jr.

Jerold Artam and his companions stood in front of their free trader, feeling rather nervous. One of the Aslans, obviously a leader, came forward and raised his left arm. Artam raised his left hand likewise and hoped that imitation was indeed the sincerest form of flattery. When the Aslan lowered his arm, Artam felt better. He hoped he done something right.

"This'll be easy," he whispered to Davis, standing next to him. Artam then stepped forward and said, "Katam alak te, puulu si na-gumba."

A look of comprehension came from the Aslan, who pulled his lips back from his sharp teeth in the equivalent of an ugly frown.

Davis leaned forward to Artam. "My God, what did you say to him?" he whispered.

"I just asked him if he would welcome us in peace," Artam replied nervously. "Maybe I said it too fast." He tried again. "Katam . . . alak . . . te . . . puulu . . . si . . . na-gumba."

The Aslan looked even less pleased, and an uneasy silence fell upon the group. The alien raised his weapon and said in clipped, accented tones, "What was that about my mother?"

Knowing a foreign language is a good thing, if you can say what you want without being misunderstood. In fact, TRAVELLER® gaming would be much easier without languages and the problems that they bring.

But languages are a part of life and adventuring. When one party meets another one and no one speaks the other's language, chances increase that there will be a misunderstanding and weapons will be drawn. Not being able to speak a certain language could prove fatal in the end.

In TRAVELLER games, you *need* to speak other languages. Every world that has a sentient native race has its own language. On balkanized worlds, dozens of separate languages may be present.

When a world government is installed, one of the first moves it usually makes is to establish a single language for the use of all the people on the planet so that everyone can understand each other and communications can be increased tenfold.

However, even single-government planets will still speak their own separate languages, each different from that of other worlds. While this might be a linguist's dream, it creates an incredible headache for anyone forced to communicate between worlds. Consider governing 1,100 worlds under a single Imperial government, and you get a rough idea of how hard communication can be in the future.

All Class A and B starports should have multilingual signs and information centers designed to help those who do not have a full understanding of Galanglic (the Imperium's official tongue). Class C starports usually have multilingual signs, and there will be a multilingual information center on a roll of 7+.

Class D starports usually lack both, having only signs in Galanglic; a translator may be found, but depending on the particular language, he may or may not be able to speak it with some degree of fluency. Roll 10+ for a fluent translator to be in the starport. Class E starports have no facilities at all; a translator may be found in the vicinity of the landing field on a roll of 12+.

Since class A, B, and C starports see so much traffic, Imperial citizens have few problems there. (It should be noted that these rules refer only to Imperial Starports. The starports of non-Imperial systems may or may not be like those described above; in the Zhodani consulate, telepaths are often employed for this purpose.) In areas independent of higher control, such as the Outrim Void, the local languages will be dominant, although a part of the population will be multilingual and speak the language(s) of their neighbors.

Translating languages into gaming

This system proposes the theory that there are certain languages that a given character class would have to learn as a matter of necessity, and others that would never be learned. Some classes would never need to learn another language during their careers. Some characters would need to learn a second language; some wouldn't, and would gain no extra language skills in their services. An exception to this is the Diplomat. Under normal circumstances, a character can learn one language for every three terms spent in a particular service; a Diplomat can learn three languages in the same time.

To find out what languages a character may know, divide his Education score in half, rounding down. This is the maximum number of languages that a character may learn during his lifetime. This includes his native language, which is learned automatically. To obtain the level of the native tongue, divide his Intelligence rating in half, rounding down; this is the level of proficiency that the character has in his native language. Example: an Education of 7 would give a maximum number of three languages that could be learned by a character (this is the native tongue and two others). An Intelligence of 10 would give that character a skill level of 5 in his native tongue.

After the player has generated his character and gone through his previous service career, have him figure out how many languages he can learn and what his native language rating is. After this, if he can learn more languages, he consults the Career Languages Chart. This indicates what languages, if any, can be learned by a character in a particular profession.

Check to see how many terms the character has served. If 3 or less, he gets a chance to learn one extra language; if 4 or more, he gets a chance to learn 2 extra languages. If he is a Diplomat, he

gets the following extra bonuses: if 3 or fewer terms were served, he gets a chance to learn three extra languages; if 4 or more terms, he gets a chance to learn six extra languages. Note: A character can never learn more than the maximum number of languages allowed by his Education.

There are several professions that have no choices for a second language. These career fields would have no need for other languages, and therefore languages are not taught to characters in those fields. However, a character may try to learn a language later while he is adventuring and after he has left that profession.

To see if the character has learned a second language, use the following system. To learn another language, roll an 11+, with the following DMs: -1 if Intelligence 6-; +1 if Intelligence 8+; +2 if Intelligence 12+; +/- any DMs from the chart. At the referee's option, Jack-o-T skill may be used as a positive DM on this roll.

If the character makes a modified roll of 10-, then he has tried to learn that particular language, but has failed. He has thus used his language roll, and cannot roll again (unless he happens to be a Diplomat, as explained above).

Fluency in each language is rated as a skill level, much like saying Gunnery-3

or Vacc Suit-1. To figure out the skill level, take the modified number from the roll and subtract 10 from it. The result is the level of knowledge that the character has in that language. If he has failed the roll, he has a fluency rating of Level-0 in that language: he can identify the language, but really knows little about it.

Example: Benjamin Eastlan, Scout, has an Intelligence of 11 and an Education of 8. He can learn a maximum of 4 languages during his lifetime (Education divided in half); as an Imperial Citizen, he learns Galanglic as his native language automatically. One-half of his Intelligence (rounded down) is 5, so for the first of his 4 languages, he gets Galanglic-5. As a Scout he can learn another language (three terms before mustering out), and he checks the chart: he gets to choose from Vargr, Zhodani, Droyne, Minor Race (including the tongues of the Darrians, Sword Worlders, Vegans, and various "lesser" alien races and social groups), and High Vilani. He picks Zhodani and gets a bonus of +2 for being a Scout. He gets an additional +1 for an Intelligence of 8+. The dice roll is a 10, modified to a 13 by his bonuses. This surpasses the requirement of 11+, so he has learned Zhodani. To see what skill level he has, he takes the modified answer and subtracts 10

from it (13-10=3), obtaining a skill level of Zhodani-3.

As a rule, no language that a character learns can be higher than the native tongue. If it is, it is lowered to the level of the native language. This represents the fact that the character has spent his life speaking the native language, and that he cannot know another language better than his native one. Of course, if he has a rating of only 1 or 2 in his native tongue, then this represents the fact that he is rather dumb. After all, if the clod can't speak his native tongue, what hope does he have of learning a foreign one?

Benjamin Eastlan musters out of the Scout Service with his money, tickets, and gear, and speaks Galanglic-5 and Zhodani-3. If he wants to, he can try later to learn up to two more languages by studying them (self-taught languages are discussed later).

Skill Levels

Level 1: The character can understand and speak a few simple words and phrases: stop, go, good morning, drop that gun, help me. He can get an idea across by using sign language and pictures, but he cannot actually converse. Each participant in a conversation must have a skill level of at least 2 in the language being used in order for meaningful verbal communication to take place.

At level-1 skill, the speaker can be understood on a roll of 11+ on 2d6; DMs are +1 if Intelligence 10+, -1 if Intelligence 6-. Roll once per minute.

Level 2: The character can speak in sentences, but it will be obvious that he is a foreigner by his misuse of words and phrases. He can be understood on a roll of 7+ on 2d6, once per minute.

Level 3: The character can be understood fairly well and can carry on a conversation (no roll required). At this level, a character can attempt to imitate a native speaker, and can get away with it on a roll of 9+ on 2d6, once per minute. At the referee's option, Jack-o-T skill can be used as a positive modifier on this roll.

Level 4: The character can be understood virtually all the time. At this level, a character can imitate a native speaker successfully on a roll of 5+ on 2d6.

Level 5: The character is a walking dictionary and can be understood in most situations. He can automatically imitate a native speaker successfully.

It is possible that a character could have a skill level higher than 5; in this case, the character has such an abundance of knowledge of the skill in ques-

Career Language Chart

	Vargr	Zhodani	Droyne	Asian	K'kree	Minor Race	High Vilani
Navy	0	+2	-	-	-	-	-1
Marines	-1	+1	-	-	-	0	-
Army	-1	0	-	-	-	-	-
scouts	0	+2	0	-	-	0	-2
Merchant	+1	-3	-	-2	-	+2	+2
Other	+1	-1	-	-	-	+1	-
Pirate	-	-	-	-	-	+2	-
Belter	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sailor	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Diplomat	+1	+2	-1	+2	-1	+1	+1
Doctor	-	-	-	-	-	-	+2
Flyer	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Barbarian	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bureaucrat	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rogue	0	+1	-3	0	0	+1	-
Noble	-	+1	-	0	-	-	+2
Scientist	-	0	-	-	-	0	+1
Hunter	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Roll 11+ to get a language, DMs as follows:

+1 if Intelligence 8+ -1 if Intelligence 6-
+2 if Intelligence 12+ +/- DMs from the above chart

(Jack-o-T skill may be used as a positive DM at ref's option.)

If no number is listed, the given language cannot be learned by a member of that profession.

tion that he speaks it like (or better than) a native. A character with a level this high could write poetry or novels, or translate foreign works into his native language in his spare time.

If a character fails a roll while attempting to pass as a native speaker, the reactions of the listeners he was trying to fool will vary with the situation; the referee must decide exactly what happens. Also, the person should look the part. Perhaps a human could not look like a Vargr for a million credits, but over the radio it's different.

Suppose the players land on an interdicted world, or on a planet beyond the Imperial Border? In a situation like this, there are usually two choices available to the referee. First, the planet was originally settled by Terran or Vilani explorers, and the language is a derivative of Anglic, Galanglic, or Vilani. In this case, the players can understand the language to some extent and make themselves understood by dividing their skill ratings by 2 (round down). The result is the temporary skill level that the characters have for the purposes of talking with the natives. Obviously, only characters with high skill levels can communicate, but it is easy to see how this is handled.

Second, the language is alien to the known languages of the Galaxy, and the characters can communicate only by sign-language and pictures. How the characters get ideas across without getting killed (a constant danger on unexplored worlds) is their problem. As often as not, such scenes are either the funniest or the most dangerous situations that characters could get into. Let the characters try this at least once in their travels, and you might be amazed. It will point out just how difficult communication is when one lacks knowledge of the language.

Learning new languages

Learning another language once out of the service is a hard job. The character must either study under a teacher or tutor, or must use some type of electronic aid. A language teacher can be found in a city on a world that has a population of 5 or higher. Private tutoring can be obtained for Cr15 per hour; a player can enroll in classes that teach languages for a fee of around Cr2,000.

A program that can teach a language and that can be used on a ship's computer can be obtained in a Class A or B starport for Cr75,000. Such a program can enable a character to learn a language during the dull, boring week that

passes while the ship is in hyperspace. The program occupies one point of CPU space in the computer, and is obtainable on worlds with a Class C starport if the planet's TL is 9+. A computer that uses the language program will require a voder/vocoder unit so that it can hear and respond to verbal commands, sounds, and pronunciations. Such a unit, if not installed already, must be purchased with the language program and will cost Cr35,000. It will also require a plug-in module for each language that it must handle. Each module costs Cr 10,000.

Learning another language will require the character to spend at least a period of nine months in study, spending two hours a day, five days a week with the tutor or the computer. Ideally, the character should spend a year studying the language to get to know it well. When the character has spent his allotted time studying and has completed his training, he rolls to see if he knows the language. This means that he must roll an 11+ with the following DMs: for nine months study, -1; for one year of study, no DM; +1 if Intelligence 9+; +2 if Intelligence 12+; -2 if Intelligence 6-. At the referee's option, a positive DM can be had for each skill level in the following skills: Jack-o-T, Liaison, and Streetwise. If the character makes a modified roll of 11+, then he succeeds. To get the skill level, subtract 10 from the answer.

Example: Benjamin Eastlan, our ex-Scout, has Galanglic-5 and Zhodani-3. He takes a course in learning the language of the Darrians. He spends time on his ship's computer, learning while in Hyperspace and between adventures. After nine months, he goes for the roll. He gets an automatic bonus of +1 for his Intelligence, -1 for only nine months of study. He has some skills, however — Streetwise-3 and Jack-o-T-2. These give him a DM of +5. He rolls a 12 (and is pretty lucky); adding his bonuses, he has a score (modified) of 17. Subtracting 10 from that would give him Darrian-7; however, that is more than his native language, so it is reduced, giving him Darrian-5. Eastlan now has Galanglic-5, Zhodani-3, and Darrian-5. Also, since he has a possible maximum of 4 languages, he could try later to learn one more language, although it would take at least another nine months of study.

Characters who don't have the time to learn another language, or who are simply too dumb, can instead use a translator. A person who can translate spoken words from one language to another can be found on virtually all

planets with starports. Translators can be hired for about Cr75 an hour, and can translate fast enough for a conversation to take place.

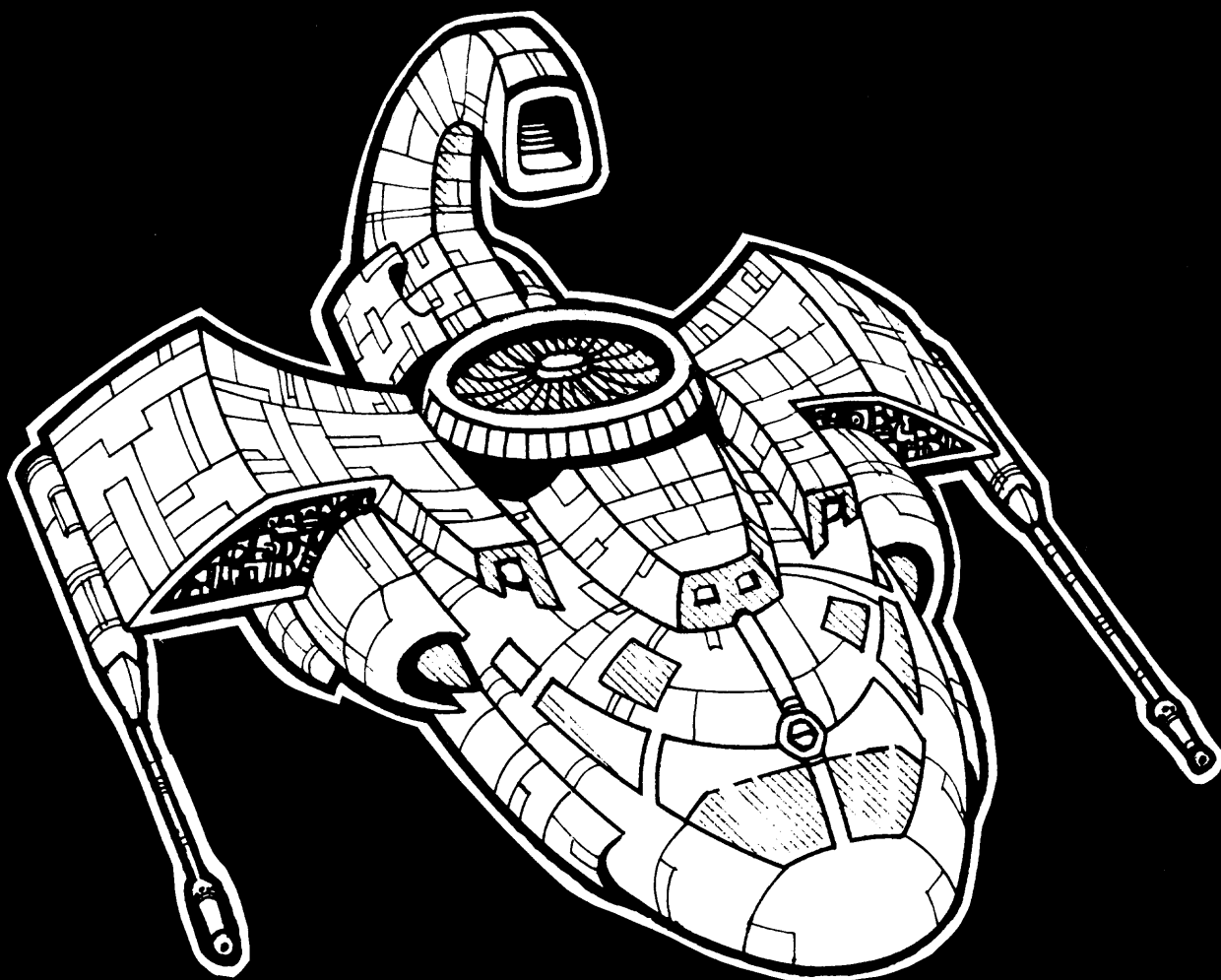
A computer program that translates printed material from one language to another can be obtained on planets with a tech level of 9+. These cost Cr 110,000 and take up one point of CPU space. A computer program that verbally translates speech from one language to another can be bought on planets with a tech level of 10+, and those cost upwards of Cr200,000. Such a program will require a voder/vocoder and will take up two points of CPU space.

A portable electronic translator, operating off a rechargeable energizer, can be bought on worlds of tech level 13+ for Cr100,000. The unit can operate for 20 hours on one charge, and can be recharged from any power outlet in a few hours. It is hung from the belt and uses a small, lightweight headphone and microphone combination. The unit has a modular plug-in and can be hooked up to receive off a radio. It uses a plug-in module to translate a particular language into another. Such chips are available for Cr5,000 each. Note that two are required, one for the language being spoken by the owner, and one for the language that the owner wants translated. A small compartment in the translator will hold three extra chips.

If a character is trying to converse with a Hiver, he will require a translator box, as will the Hiver he is talking to. These devices are available only on planets of tech level 14+, and cost Cr100,000.

The main aspect of languages, aside from causing some very interesting (and often funny) situations, is that it enlarges the scope of the size and diversity of the TRAVELLER® game universe. It also allows the referee the enjoyable experience of seeing the characters go through the "pidgin English" syndrome ("Me Imperial person, come from far away, go to place in sky. You understando?"), and it tests the theory that anyone can understand you if you speak loudly and slowly enough.

By inserting the problems of different languages into a campaign, the referee can add a touch of realism and depth that makes the game interesting and fun, not to mention tougher. It can make a character unique, round out a persona and make it into an individual. Of course, it does make for a few problems: did that guard believe you are a visiting Darrian official, or is he getting ready to call Security? Only the referee knows. **A**



Day of the Juggernaut

A STAR FRONTIERS® Knight Hawks scenario by William Tracy

In the weeks following the famed Battle for Voltarnus (detailed in module SF 2, *Starspawn of Voltarnus*), the Sathar made no threatening moves against the Frontier. The atmosphere in the UPF was tense for weeks, but gradually calm returned and military forces were taken off their heightened alert status. Just as the races of the UPF were feeling safe again, the Sathar initiated a new attack.

While an assault scout from Scree Fron was on patrol on the outer edge of that star system, the scout came under attack from a gigantic ship that had just exited the Void nearby. The scout was able to send out a distress call before being destroyed, and it reported that the

huge ship was heading for the inhabited world of Hakosoar.

Whether by pure good fortune or with the knowledge of the Sathar (who may have seen this as a test of their fighting vessel), a recently reorganized Strike Force NOVA was present at Hakosoar. Instantly, the force admiral ordered his fleet to defend the planet at all costs, and the fight was joined.

Unknown to the UPF, the gigantic ship was an experimental Sathar war machine, a prototype completely automated and commanded by onboard computer systems and robots. Its mission was to reach Hakosoar and orbit the planet three times, bombarding the

major cities with space-to-ground missiles. Though of horrifying size, the war machine was the only one of its kind. The Sathar had built only one *Juggernaut*, since the cost was enormous, but they were willing to consider building other robot ships if this one proved itself against the Federation's best.

Sathar forces

SAV *Juggernaut* (robot warship)
 HP 480 ADF 1 MR 1 DCR 300
 Weapons: DC, LB (x8), PB (x2), EB (x4),
 T (space-to-ground missiles) (x16),
 RB (x20)
 Defenses: RH, ES, PS, SS, ICM (x24)

The *Juggernaut* carried a new type of robotic short-range fighter, known to the Federation as the *Scorpion* (hull size 2). The fighters were programmed for launch the moment a UPFS vessel came within 100,000 km (10 hexes) of the *Juggernaut*.

20 *Scorpions*

HP 10 ADF 3 MR 3 DCR 29

Weapons: LB

Defenses: RH

UPFS forces (Strike Force NOVA)

UPFS *Admiral Clinton* (battleship)

HP 120 ADF 2 MR 2 DCR 200

Weapons: DC, LB (x3), PB, EB (x2),

S (x4), T (x8), RB (x10)

Defenses: RH, ES, PS, SS, ICM (x12)

UPFS *Zamra* and *Grak* (heavy cruisers)

HP 80 ADF 2 MR 1 DCR 120

Weapons: LB (x2), PB, EB, DC, S (x2),

T (x4), RB (x8)

Defenses: RH, ES, PS, SS, ICM (x8)

UPFS *Courage* and *Glory* (light cruisers)

HP 70 ADF 3 MR 2 DCR 70

Weapons: DC, LB, EB, PB, RB (x6),

T (x4)

Defenses: RH, ES, SS, ICM (x8)

UPFS *Shimmer*, *Zz'Nakk*, *Z'Gata*, and *Driadia* (frigates)

HP 40 ADF 4 MR 3 DCR 70

Weapons: LC, RB (x4), LB, T (x2)

Defenses: RH, MS (x2), ICM (x4)

UPFS *Scimitar*, *Dagger*, *Rapier*, *Lancet*, and *Razor* (assault scouts)

HP 15 ADF 5 MR 4 DCR 50

Weapons: AR (x4), LB

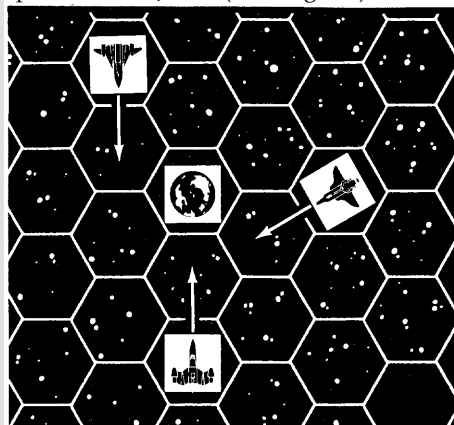
Defenses: RH

Scenario set-up

A planet counter should be placed in hex 2819, in the center of the Knight Hawks space map; this is the planet Hakosoar. [Editor's note: Hakosoar has five natural satellites, but for the purposes of this scenario they need not be placed on the mapboard.]

The *Juggernaut*, with all fighters aboard it, will enter the game map from either of the "shorter" sides of the rectangular map. Initially, it will have a speed of 5 hexes/turn, and will be decelerating so that it may enter orbit around Hakosoar. Once a spacecraft has reached a speed of 1 hex/turn and moves into a hex adjacent to Hakosoar (without heading directly into the planet), it may take

up orbit around that world at a constant speed of 1 hex/turn (see diagram).



The upper ships may enter counterclockwise and clockwise orbits; the lower one may go either way.

The UPFS player may place his starships anywhere on the game map; the ships may start the game traveling at any speed up to 5 hexes/turn, facing in any direction. The UPFS player automatically knows in which direction the *Juggernaut* is approaching and may arrange his forces accordingly.

Tactics and victory conditions

The *Juggernaut* will head immediately for Hakosoar, and will (initially, at least) let its *Scorpions* take care of the UPFS

ships. It will not fire any of its space-to-ground missiles until it reaches the planet, then will fire 1 missile per turn at the planet as it orbits the world, bombarding the major residential and industrial centers. The ship may, of course, fire any of its weapons systems at attacking UPFS ships while bombing the planet.

Once it finishes firing all of its missiles, the *Juggernaut* will attempt to flee. If it leaves the mapboard, regardless of how many UPFS ships are chasing it, it is assumed to have escaped and made it into the Void without further damage. If the *Juggernaut* is destroyed or leaves the map at any time, the *Scorpions* will self-destruct and will not attempt to be picked up by their parent ship.

If the UPFS ships destroy the *Juggernaut* before it reaches Hakosoar to begin its bombardment, the Federation wins the battle. If the *Juggernaut* is able to orbit the planet but fires fewer than six missiles before it is destroyed, the Federation wins a marginal victory. If the UPFS ships cannot stop the *Juggernaut* from bombing the planet six or more times, but destroy the war machine before it can leave the map, the game is a draw. If the *Juggernaut* can escape from the mapsheet, the Sathar have won.

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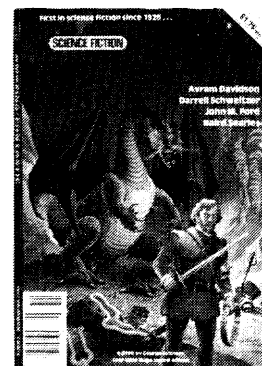
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The MARVEL[®]-Phile

by Jeff Grubb

First, an apology. Because of my work at the GEN CON[®] 17 Convention, my own vacation, and putting the finishing touches on the Alpha Flight[™] module, I missed a deadline. No nasty notes to the magazine staff, please!

Someone asked me a question at the convention about claws and body armor. Body armor subtracts from claw damage; if the rank of body armor is greater than the claw damage, no damage is done and the defender cannot be stunned or slain. Wolverine[™] cannot slay

Ben Grimm[™] outright; Ben's hide is too tough for an instant kill.

An exception to this rule (which brought up the whole discussion) concerns Body Armor in the form of a battle suit or metal plate, such as that used by a Soviet Super-Trooper[™] or a Sentinel[™]. Wolverine's claws could not hurt the occupant or damage the internal circuits of a Super-Trooper suit, but he *could* shred the metal in the first round of combat. It would require a Fighting FEAT to hit the armor and a

Strength FEAT to rip it up. Wolverine could then do damage to the suit's wearer on the following rounds (if he hits the suit in the same location).

On to business. The first two MARVEL-Philes concerned princely beings: Thor[™], prince of Asgard, and Namor[™], former prince of Atlantis. Let's move to the other side of the spectrum to two denizens of the city: the mysterious Cloak[™], the beautiful Dagger[™], and some notes on alcohol and drug abuse in the MARVEL SUPER HEROES[™] game.

CLOAK[™]

Tyrone Johnson, Runaway

Fighting: TYPICAL (6)
Agility: GOOD (10)
Strength: EXCELLENT (20)
Endurance: INCREDIBLE (40)
Reason: TYPICAL (6)
Intuition: EXCELLENT (20)
Psyche: GOOD (10)

Health: 76
Karma: 36
Resources: POOR
Popularity: 3

POWERS:

THE DARK DIMENSION: Cloak's body serves as an opening into the Dark Dimension, a region of cold, inky blackness. This darkness serves as MONSTROUS Body Armor. It also lowers all battle effects against Cloak by one color; Green becomes White, Yellow becomes Green, and Red becomes Yellow. Cloak is therefore immune from a "kill" result from knives or a "slam" in a slugfest.

Anyone caught within the folds of Cloak's cape (which requires Cloak to make a Wrestling FEAT) loses one rank of Endurance for each round he remains within. When Endurance reaches zero, the character is unconscious. A victim's Health is also lowered one rank per round, and Cloak may use the "light" he has taken from the victim to increase his Health up to his listed maximum.

Cloak's darkness feeds off "living light," either Dagger's or the light of living creatures. "Living light" is the luminous body energy shared by all living things in the MARVEL[®] Universe. Cloak must make a Yellow Psyche FEAT in order for him to give up someone he has "swallowed," but he receives 20 Karma points for doing so.



DARKNESS GENERATION: Cloak can release an inky blackness (covering up to three areas) from his cape. No being can see within this blackness, save for light-generating beings such as Dazzler™ and Dagger. All characters caught in the blackness are DOWN THREE to hit.

TELEPORT: Cloak can fully enter the Dark Dimension and move instantaneously to another location. His current maximum range is one-half mile. He may take others into the Dark Dimension with him, making an Endurance FEAT roll to do so. If he fails, the Teleport still works, but Cloak is Stunned for 1-10 rounds. Any characters so Teleported suffer the effects of being in the Dark Dimension (losing Endurance, see above), unless accompanied by Dagger,

whose light staves off darkness.

Cloak's Story: Tyrone Johnson was born in South Boston, and was a good student despite an incapacitating stutter. He and his friend Billy became witnesses to a robbery and murder; terrified, Billy ran, and Tyrone's speech defect prevented him from stopping a police officer from shooting Billy. Holding himself responsible for his friend's death, Tyrone fled to New York City.

In New York, he met Tandy Bowen, also a runaway. The pair was quickly set upon by a street gang that preyed on young arrivals to the city. Tyrone and Tandy were kidnapped and were taken to Ellis Island along with other young runaways. There a mob chemist named Simon Marshall was experimenting with

a synthetic substitute for heroin. The other runaways perished in the experiments, but the drug reacted with Tyrone's and Tandy's systems, turning Tyrone into a creature of living darkness. Upon their escape he became known as Cloak.

Cloak is a changed individual, not at all like Tyrone Johnson. His stutter has been replaced by a base, rumbling voice. He is driven by a hunger for light; Dagger's light can sustain him, but he often resists feeding upon it, feeling like a parasite. He has no sympathy for those who prey on the weak, and in particular he hates drug dealers, addicts, and those who harm young people. The referee should consider reducing the full Karma loss for deaths caused by Cloak involving evil criminals.

DAGGER™

Tandy Bowen, Runaway

Fighting: EXCELLENT (20)
Agility: EXCELLENT (20)
Strength: TYPICAL (6)
Endurance: REMARKABLE (30)
Reason: GOOD (10)
Intuition: GOOD (10)
Psyche: GOOD (10)

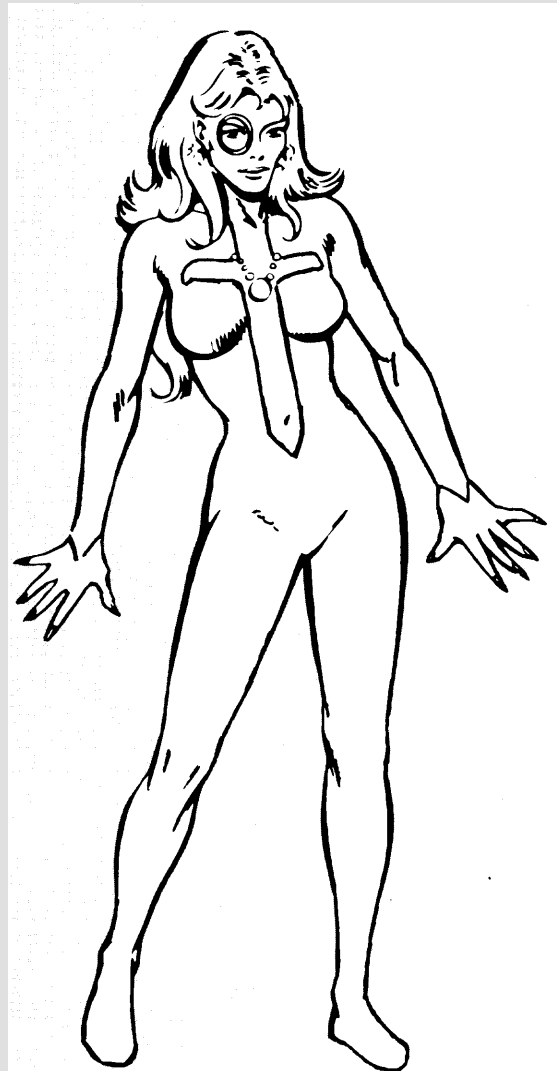
Health: 76
Karma: 30
Resources: POOR
Popularity: 7

POWERS:

LIGHT GENERATION: Dagger can illuminate up to two areas with a glow radiating from her body. She can use this to Stun her opponents for 1 round; an Endurance FEAT roll is required to avoid this effect.

DAGGERS: Dagger can hurl daggers made of light from her fingertips. These daggers do EXCELLENT damage, and can penetrate up to TYPICAL Body Armor. Anyone hit with one of these daggers has his system purged of foreign substances (including poisons, alcohol, and all drugs). The victim must make an Endurance FEAT roll, failure indicating loss of three ranks of Endurance for 24 hours and paralysis for 1-100 rounds. If Endurance drops below FEEBLE, the character will perish. Success indicates unconsciousness for 1-10 rounds, and all foreign substances are banished from the person's system. Individuals who have been affected by powerful, long-term influences on their systems, including super-soldier serums and radiation, will not have these effects nullified by Dagger's powers.

ACROBATICS: Dagger was a student of dance before her transformation, and she has converted her talent into a unique, dangerous fighting style. Her Agility is considered REMARKABLE when she performs a Dodge action in combat.



Dagger's Story: Tandy Bowen grew up in Shaker Heights, Ohio, a rich girl ignored by her "fashionable" parents. Feeling unloved and alone, she headed for New York, hoping to be successful in dancing.

In New York she met Tyrone Johnson, another runaway who saved her from a robbery. The pair was subsequently kidnapped by a gang preying upon runaways, and the pair was shipped to Ellis Island. The mob was conducting chemical experiments on Ellis Island to find a synthetic form of heroin. Tyrone, Tandy, and the other runaways were their guinea pigs.

The other runaways perished from the experimental drug, but Tandy and Tyrone survived and escaped, their bodies mutating under the drug's effects. Tandy gained her light-based powers and deadly, cleansing missiles, and became the vigilante Dagger.

Dagger generates luminous energy that can purge others of foreign substances. She can heal, but the shock of the sudden change can kill. She is more sympathetic to the victims of drug addiction than her compatriot Cloak, but joins him in a war against drug dealers and manufacturers. Award Karma points to Dagger for healing addicts, but give her full penalties for killing anyone.

Notes on Drugs and Alcohol

HARD DRUGS: In the MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ game, a hard drug is defined as any addictive drug that is hazardous to the user's mental and physical health. Such drugs often block the awareness of pain, so that they have the short-term affect of raising Endurance one rank (to a maximum of EXCELLENT) for 2-20 rounds. After that time, Endurance is lowered one rank from the original score for the next twenty-four hours. During this period, drugs also lower Reason and Intuition by two ranks each (to a minimum of FEEBLE).

Regular, uncontrolled abuse of drugs can lead to addiction. The Judge may call for a Psyche FEAT roll at the end of any week in which a character has used drugs more than twice. Shift DOWN ONE for every week of continued use. A successful Psyche FEAT means the character is still in control of his drug use. Failure means the character is hooked on the drug and craves more of it.

Drug addiction can be an ugly thing. The user needs daily dosages of his drug, failure resulting in a one-rank loss of Endurance and Intuition per day without the drug, to a minimum of FEEBLE. In NPCs, the character will become

He has no sympathy for those who prey on the weak, and in particular he hates drug dealers, addicts and those who harm young people.

violent if denied his fix. The only way to break the habit is by going cold turkey (see below).

ALCOHOL: Alcohol is called "courage in a bottle," and this is its effect in the game. Raise Fighting one rank for a character who has been drinking. However, lower the Agility and Intuition of drinking characters (including super-heroes) two ranks, to a minimum of POOR.

Alcohol also has a nasty aftereffect, the hangover. Make a Yellow Endurance FEAT (or Red, at the Judge's option), or suffer from a shift DOWN ONE in all actions the next morning. Another drink will allow a second FEAT roll. This opens the door to . . .

. . . Alcohol abuse, which is as deadly as drug abuse. NPCs can be determined by the judge to be alcoholic or not. Player characters use a similar method to that given for drugs. If a character is drinking alcohol more than three times a week, make a Psyche FEAT. Effects of success and failure are as for drugs, with the loss of Endurance (and resulting Health) if kept from drinking. Endurance cannot drop below FEEBLE.

COLD TURKEY: This is the popular name for deliberately going without something — in this case, drugs — in order to break a habit. The addicted character stops taking the drug to which he is addicted and "guts it out." He will suffer the effects of not using the drug

(loss of Endurance), but at the end of each day he makes a Psyche FEAT roll. Success indicates the loss of Endurance stops there; failure indicates that the Endurance loss continues into the next day with another Psyche FEAT roll at the end, combined with an overwhelming desire for the drug. If two Psyche rolls in a row fail, the character will become violent and will continue losing Endurance ranks. Roll for each day until a full week of not using the drug or alcohol has passed. The character can be considered "clean" at the week's end.

Going cold turkey purges the body of its poisons, as does a hit from one of Dagger's light-missiles. Being hit by one of her missiles has the same effect as going cold turkey, but involves a great risk to the person affected (see the description of Dagger given above).

A character who has kicked the habit has a good chance of backsliding even after he has stopped using drugs or alcohol. Each week the "clean" character makes a Psyche FEAT roll. One failure indicates some backsliding, while two in a row indicates a return to the addicted stage, with all the penalties of the original state. The Judge may modify the FEAT roll according to the immediate situation (business pressure, personal loss, or seeking help). Karma may be added to any of these rolls.

KARMA AND DRUGS: Drug use and drug abuse are illegal in most states. Heroes will lose 40 Karma for dealing in hard drugs, 40 for using hard drugs themselves, and all Karma if someone's death results from these actions. Alcohol is *slightly* more acceptable; heroes lose 5 Karma points for every alcoholic drink taken or 30 for each night of drunkenness. Friends of an alcoholic or drug abuser lose 5-20 Karma points for not helping a friend in need. Villains suffer similar losses as heroes, but receive a 10 Karma bonus for selling drugs, *only* if they follow up with another sale within the week. The super-criminal Kingpin™ will not traffic in drugs, because they are a deadly habit for villains as well as heroes.

A final note: The above rules are simplified for use in the game, and are optional. These rules were developed especially for this article, since drugs are a central part of Cloak and Daggers background. To exclude reference to drug and alcohol abuse would be to exclude some of the realism of the MARVEL® Universe from which these two superheroes came.

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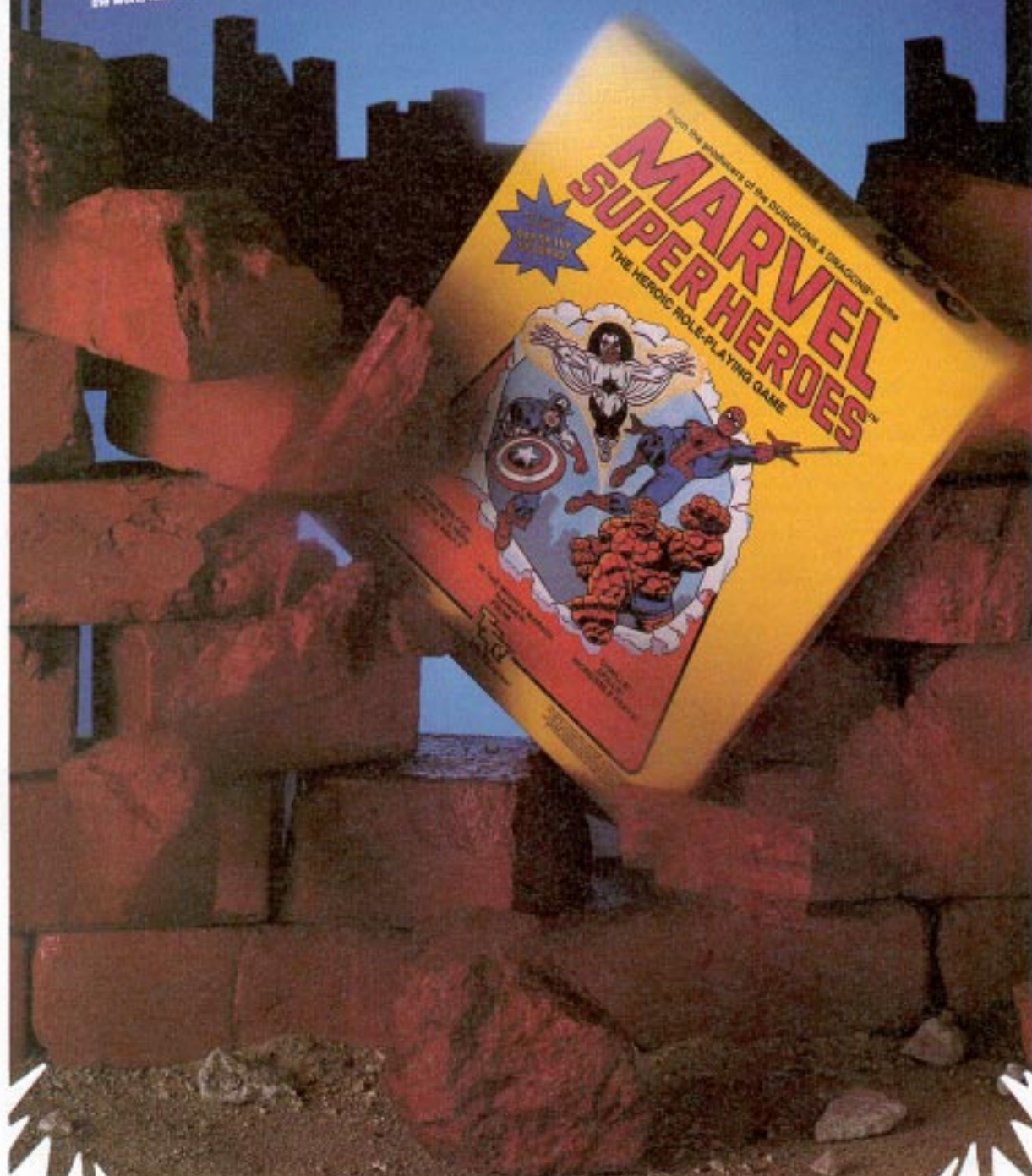
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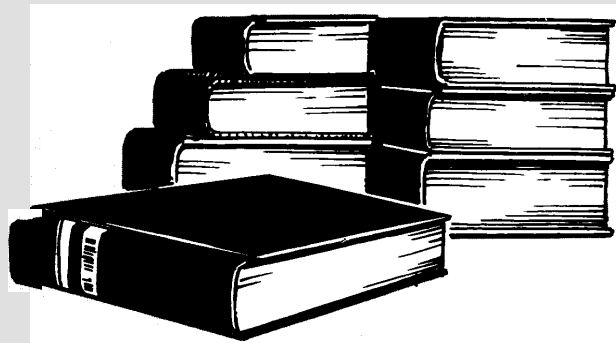
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Careers in Star Law



More on interstellar law enforcement

by Alex Curylo

In his article "Freeze! Star Law!" (DRAGON® Magazine, issue #87), Kim Eastland detailed the organization of Star Law in the STAR FRONTIERS® game. A number of details required so that player characters can follow a career in Star Law were not discussed, however. The following is an addendum to "Freeze! Star Law!" and presents new material on enlisting and serving in the Frontier's police force.

Enlistment

All Star Law officers must be above average in several respects. Four of their ability scores must be at least five points above their racial average (see the Expanded Rules, p. 59), two of which must be their Intuition and Logic scores.

Example: A player wants his Yazirian character, Simba (ability scores STR/STA 40/40, DEX/RS 40/40, INT/LOG 60/60, PER/LDR 40/40), to become a Star Law officer. Checking the table, he sees that the Yazirian average for Intuition and Logic is 50. Therefore, Simba's scores must be at least 55 in those areas; they are, easily. His other scores are not good enough to qualify in the DEX/RS or PER/LDR areas. Luckily, the Yazirian average for Strength and Stamina is 35, so Simba is qualified to enter Star Law.

All admission procedures take place at Star Law headquarters (Port Loren, Gran Quivera), and characters must furnish their own transportation there. If this rule causes problems, it can be declared that a qualified character who is interviewed at any Star Law planetary office and passes a Personality check will be considered an excellent candidate by the Planetary Officer and will receive free transportation to Port Loren.

The admission procedure is tough. The character will be doped with Telol and psycho-probed while being examined on every facet of his beliefs, attitudes, and history. All interviews are monitored by hidden cameras and sonic analyzers so that any attempts to use Hypnotism or Persuasion skills will be

detected. Any character who uses those skills, or who has a criminal record or subversive beliefs (including a "bad attitude"), will never be admitted to the academy. The referee should enforce this strictly — after all, the characters won't be able to beat a system that hasn't failed in 127 years.

If the character passes the screening, he will be granted an interview with the Admissions Director of the Academy. If the candidate makes a favorable impression (passes a Personality check), he is accepted as a cadet. If he fails, he may try again next year.

Training

The Star Law Academy is situated on Morgaine's World, in a huge complex which includes hundreds of hectares of land enclosed in climate-controlled domes that simulate adverse conditions found on various worlds for the purpose of combat and survival training. The cadets undergo extensive physical and tactical training, and are taught all available information on Sathar capabilities and subterfuge tactics, the culture and history of the known races, and anything generally useful to their line of work (which means practically everything). The training period lasts one year, during which cadets receive free room and board, but no pay.

Graduates of the academy receive a number of benefits. The continual physical training improves the characters; they may add five points to one ability of the STR/STA pair and one of the DEX/RS pair. They will also have acquired extensive skills during the program, depending on their PSA and desires. These skills are listed below.

Technological/Biosocial: One 5th-level skill and one 3rd-level skill from the appropriate PSA, a 2nd-level ranged weapons skill (usually beam), and 1st-level in a non-ranged weapon Military skill (usually Melee),

Military: Two 5th-level weapon skills, 2nd-level Martial Arts, 1st-level Demolitions.

It will be noted that these skills are rather powerful. Referees may wish to tone them down somewhat, but should keep in mind that even low-level Star Law officers are rather awe-inspiring and formidable.

Once graduated, the new Deputy Officer must be assigned to a world. The referee may pick a world at random or by design. Generally, Star Law Deputy Officers are assigned to worlds where they fit in well with the inhabitants; Dralasite agents, for example, would stand out on a world inhabited almost exclusively by Yazirians. Some exceptions are made as the need arises, and the policy is not particularly strict.

Advancement

In Mr. Eastland's article, it was said that "after a period of time, usually one to three years, the Deputy Officer is evaluated and may be promoted to a higher grade." A good rule, and very realistic. However, the players in all groups I've gamed with would loudly and persistently accuse the hapless referee of favoritism or maliciousness (depending on their viewpoint) in all subjective decisions, such as the period of time before evaluation, the merits of the character under consideration, and the appropriate level of promotion.

Star Law rank	xp needed	Daily pay (cr)
Deputy officer	(graduate)	50
City officer	25	75
Planetary officer	50	100
Deputy agent	100	125
Chief agent	150	150
Ranger	250	200
Marshal	300	250
Commander	350	300

To eliminate this inevitable dissension and also for greater consistency with official rules for Spacefleet advancement, it is suggested that Star Law ranks be treated like Spacefleet ranks, in that a certain number of experience points

must be "spent" to achieve each rank. At least one level must be gained in at least one skill before another rank can be achieved. The table lists the x.p.s required, and also notes the salary that each rank receives.

Miscellaneous data

When the Deputy Officer graduates from the Academy, he receives his dress uniform, his duty uniform (a military skainsuit in Star Law blue), and regulation weapons for his assigned planet — typically a sonic stunner and a stunstick, but certain planets such as Outer Reach require more powerful weapons as standard issue, and perhaps a defensive screen as well. Of course, when on an assigned mission, agents will be issued whatever weapons, defenses, and equipment are appropriate and reasonable.

Star Law agents are respected throughout the Frontier. Whenever an NPC must make a Leadership check vs. a Star Lawman, the agent gets a +5 bonus per rank.


Since the agents often have to rely on their own resources, Star Law encourages them to develop their personal skills. This policy has a practical side: Star Law will provide hypno-training (see Expanded Rules, p. 11) for any

agent wishing to gain new skills or skill levels.

Star Law agents are often called upon to perform undercover work. These assignments will be of two basic types. The first is *infiltration*, where the agent attempts to join an organization, "become" an enemy agent, or other similar action. In such a case, Star Law will fabricate a history for the agent right back to his birth records, and will alter computer databases and hypnotize key people so that almost any amount of checking will not discover anything unusual about him.

The other type of assignment is *replacement*, where an enemy agent has been neutralized, but Star Law does not wish that fact to become known or wishes to plant its own contact inside the organization. For this type of assignment, setup will include plastic surgery, voice and carriage training, and memory overlays so the agent has instant access to most of his model's memories.

Star Law agents are a special group of beings. Though the work of defending the Frontier is demanding and dangerous, Star Law agents thrive on it. Their courage and dedication have resulted in their becoming the universally admired folk heroes of the Frontier.



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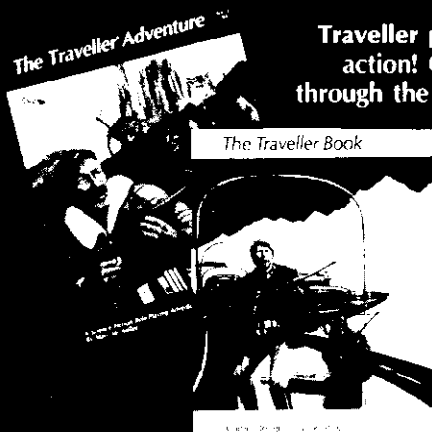
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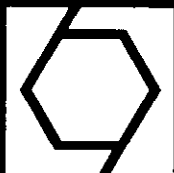


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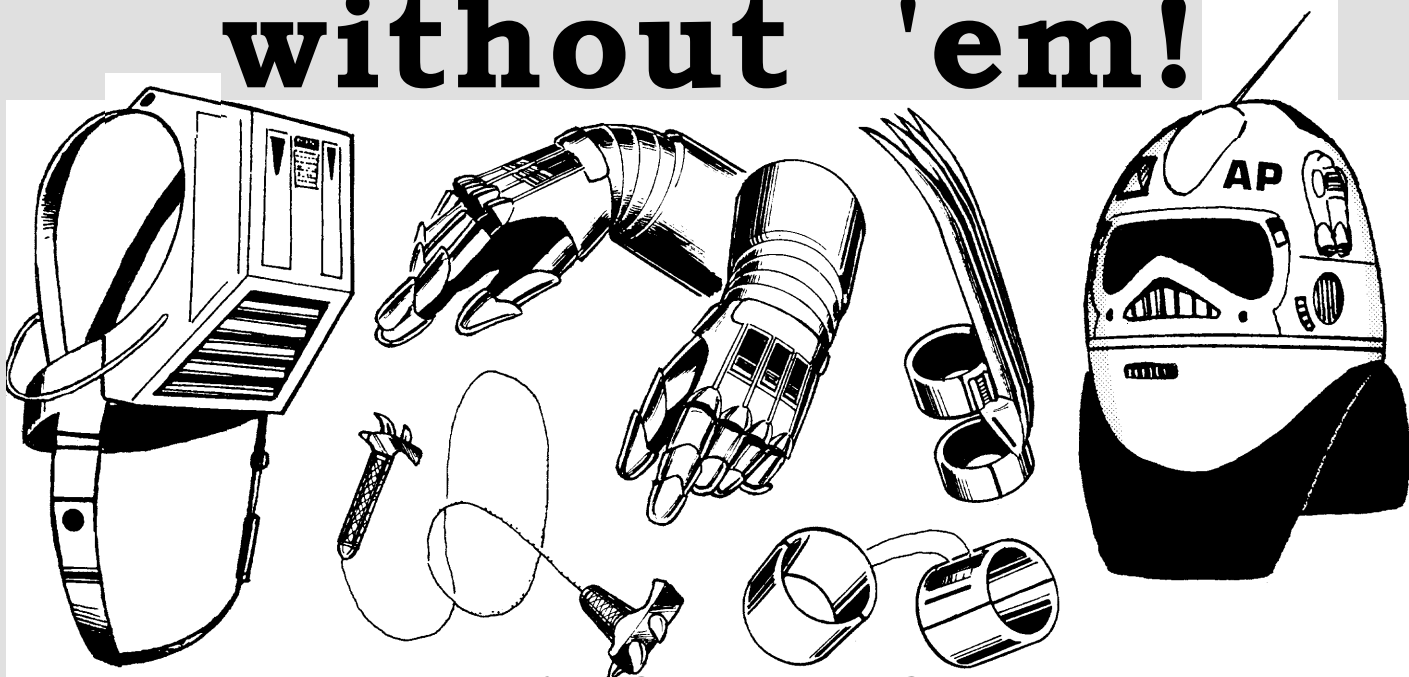
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New equipment for GAMMA WORLD® gaming

by Scott Hutcheon

The need for new equipment in GAMMA WORLD game campaigns is high; players will eventually learn about most of the items listed in the rulebooks, and referees should always have some interesting and innovative artifacts lying about in the ruins that can be discovered by eager characters. It often happens, however, that the referee won't have the time to sit down and create all the new items the players are hoping to see.

Below is described some equipment that won't be found in the GAMMA WORLD game rules. Some items are entirely new, and some are futuristic representations of existing items. Hopefully, they'll add a little more variety to the catalog of what well-dressed atomic survivors are wearing these days.

Energized assault helmet

The energized assault helmet was used during the Social Wars by infantry for massed battles. Designed to protect the head and face from physical damage, it was also equipped with additional features. The helmet, used alone, has the equivalent armor class of a *partial carapace* (AC 6). If worn with additional armor, it will improve that armor's value by two classes (e.g., plastic armor worn with the energized assault helmet would

be AC 1). The helmet cannot lower the defender's armor class below 1.

The helmet is treated as an artifact with tech level and complexity EIII. It will not be for sale except under special circumstances, and only in Tech Level III areas. Characters will receive one rank level if they turn this helmet in to their village or community.

The helmet can sustain up to 50 hit points of damage before being destroyed, and projects a partial force field that can absorb up to 20 hit points per action turn inflicted by energy weapons directed at the character. The helm gives the wearer immunity to all gases, and has a 24-hour oxygen supply that is automatically activated when a non-breathable atmosphere is encountered; this function can be activated by the wearer's voice command as well.

The helmet contains a two-way radio, ultraviolet and infrared sensors, and a radar/sonar device that can pick up objects at a range of 50 meters (preventing the wearer from ever being surprised). The audio system automatically dampens loud noises (allowing half damage from sonic attacks) and amplifies soft noises (increasing hearing ranges to four times normal).

The energized assault helmet also contains a dataprobe that can separate from the helmet and fly over the terrain

ahead of the wearer to transmit information back on possible dangers. The probe can be directed up to 200 meters away if the target area is in sight, but has a range of only 100 meters if directed to a hidden source (such as around a corner). The probe has a weapon class of 4 and can sustain 20 points of damage before being destroyed. The helmet wearer must control the dataprobe using tongue and cheek controls inside the helm, and must remain stationary and concentrate to do so. Stopping control for even a second will cause the dataprobe to drop to the ground, requiring its retrieval and reconnection to the helmet before it will again be ready to function.

The helmet can spray gas at opponents within 10 meters through a special opening in the front. The gas will billow out to create a 10-meter-diameter cloud, generated from small containers that fit into a compartment on one side of the helmet. Four gas containers can be fitted into this compartment; roll 1d4 to determine how many packs are found with the helmet and randomly roll the gas type.

The helmet can also become electrically charged on the surface, causing 1d6 damage to anyone touching it by hand or with a metallic object. The wearer cannot be harmed by this func-

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tion because of the helmet's insulation.

The helmet is powered by four solar energy cells that constantly recharge themselves while in sunlight. The cells can last up to 40 hours if not under direct sunlight (such as in an underground installation). It will take one hour of exposure in sunlight to recharge dead cells so they can be used again. Three action turns are required to remove the helmet.

The helmet has a half-ovoid shape with an opaque black shield on the front. A small ovoid with many extrusions is connected to one side of the helm (this is the data probe). The bottom of the helmet has a thick, rubbery extension that fits around the wearer's neck. Various ancient runes are printed on the sides of the helm. It weighs 8 kg.

Energy shackles

Energy shackles are energized duralloy handcuffs designed to restrain a human or humanoid-like being. "E-shacks" were used by prisons and police forces during the Shadow Years. Energy shackles consist of two bands of thick duralloy material with a thin wire linking the cuffs together. These cuffs are activated by a small switch on one cuff that can only be controlled by a Stage IV I.D. (formerly used by civilian and military law enforcement agencies). Activation causes the wire to stiffen and hold the cuffs rigidly apart or together, as the activator desires, and causes an energy flow to develop around the cuffs and wire. The energy flow will be seen as a shimmering light.

The special energy flow in the shackles causes the victim to become totally passive and submissive; he will be unable to commit any violent act and will not even try to escape while under this influence. This effect is negated as soon as the shackles are removed. Attempts to stop the flow of the energy will generally fail, though *energy negation* will immediately deactivate the shackles. Two hydrogen cells will provide energy for each cuff for 100 hours. When unpowered, the shackles can take 30 hit points of damage before being destroyed; this increases to 60 points when they are turned on.

"E-shacks" have a rating of DIII for artifact value. They are worth 100 status points.

Powered energy gloves

Powered energy gloves are electro-mechanical devices used in hand-to-hand

combat. They have a weapon class of 1 and do 2d6 points damage per fist attack; normally powered, the gloves can break through wooden doors in 2 rounds. Their artifact level is DIII, and they are worth 500 status points when returned to a community. The gloves weigh 3 kg., and they appear to be a dull silvery color.

Powered gloves cannot be used with any other weapon unless they are deactivated. The gloves have several special functions, controlled by small buttons on the backs of the gloves. They may generate a powerful electromagnetic field of variable intensity. If the field is at full strength and the gloves are attached to a metal object, they will bond with the metal with an equivalent strength of 18; only attackers with a strength of 19 or greater will be able to pry the wearer away from the surface. The gloves can also attach themselves to a metallic robot, allowing the wearer to inflict 2d6 points of damage on the robot every round without a "to hit" roll being required.

These gauntlets can also give out a beam of light from the right index finger, illuminating a 3-meter square area up to 20 meters away. The gloves are powered by two chemical energy cells (one per glove) that last for 60 action turns of continuous use.

Duralink garrote

This item is a small, thin chain of strengthened duralloy links, usually 1 meter long and weighing .2 kg. It can be bought or sold at any Tech II or III level area for 100 gold pieces. Turning it in to one's community will be worth 50 status points. The garrote has a weapon class of 2.

The duralink garrote is usable as a weapon only if the intended victim is surprised. The garrote must be wrapped around the victim's neck, then pulled back and tightened. Opponents will suffer 1d10 hit points damage per action turn until the garrote is removed or the attacker is driven off or slain. Attacks made by the defender on the attacker are at -4 "to hit." The garrote may also be used as a whip against AC 10 opponents for 1d4 points damage (covered areas are unaffected). Defenses that strengthen the neck (such as the rubber neck covering on the energized assault helmet) cause the garrote to do only 1d4 damage per action turn. Defenders with metal neck protection (such as that found on powered armor) will suffer no damage or penalties.

Duralloy war claws

These devices improve hand-to-hand combat ability, allowing one to slash at opponents like a tiger or other clawed animal. They are most often used by Pure Strain Humans and Humanoids, though mutated animals with human-like arms may use them as well. Duralloy war claws weigh .5 kilograms and are worth 300 status points. They can be found or sold at a community of any tech level for 500 gold pieces.

The claws do one point of damage per armor class point of the victim; e.g., the claws will do 10 points of damage to unarmored characters. Two attacks per action turn can be made with these claws. The claws can also be used for climbing vertical walls of any material less strong than duralloy. The climbing is done at a very slow speed, as characters must be sure of the placement of the claws. The claws can help break down wooden doors in 4-16 rounds, but cannot open duralloy-shielded doors.

The war claws are made of four duralloy knifelike projections, each about .3 meters long, that curve down at the end. The claws are connected to small wristlets of duralloy that allow the claws to reach out over the back of one's hand. The claws take one action turn to remove.

Anti-grav pack

This pack generates a null-gravity field around the wearer. The pack weighs 30 kg when turned off and contains a few anti-grav pods connected to the main power outlet. The character can float straight up or down at the rate of 10 meters per action turn. Up to 200 kg, excluding the weight of the pack itself, can be lifted by the pack. Characters using the anti-grav pack will be affected by high winds, and falling as a result of the pack being shut off or the energy cell running out of power is always a possibility. Characters using this pack and being attacked by ranged weapons will be hit as if they were stationary.

The pack is rated EIII and is worth 3,000 gold pieces at any Tech Level III community. The anti-grav pack is powered by two atomic energy cells that will last for 100 hours.

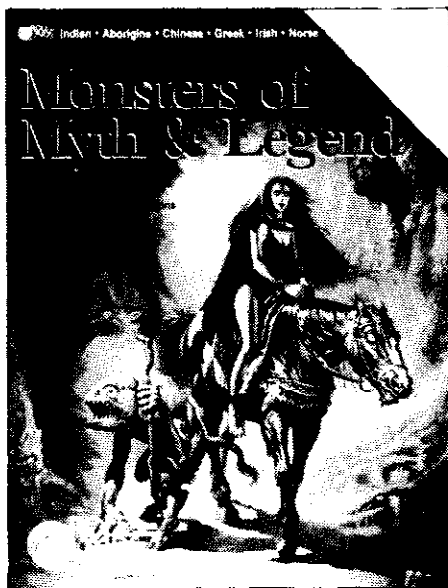
The anti-grav pack looks like an ordinary backpack with strange runes on the covering. A dark meter-long cord extends from one side of the pack, having a small metallic box with lights and buttons on the end (the box is the control device).



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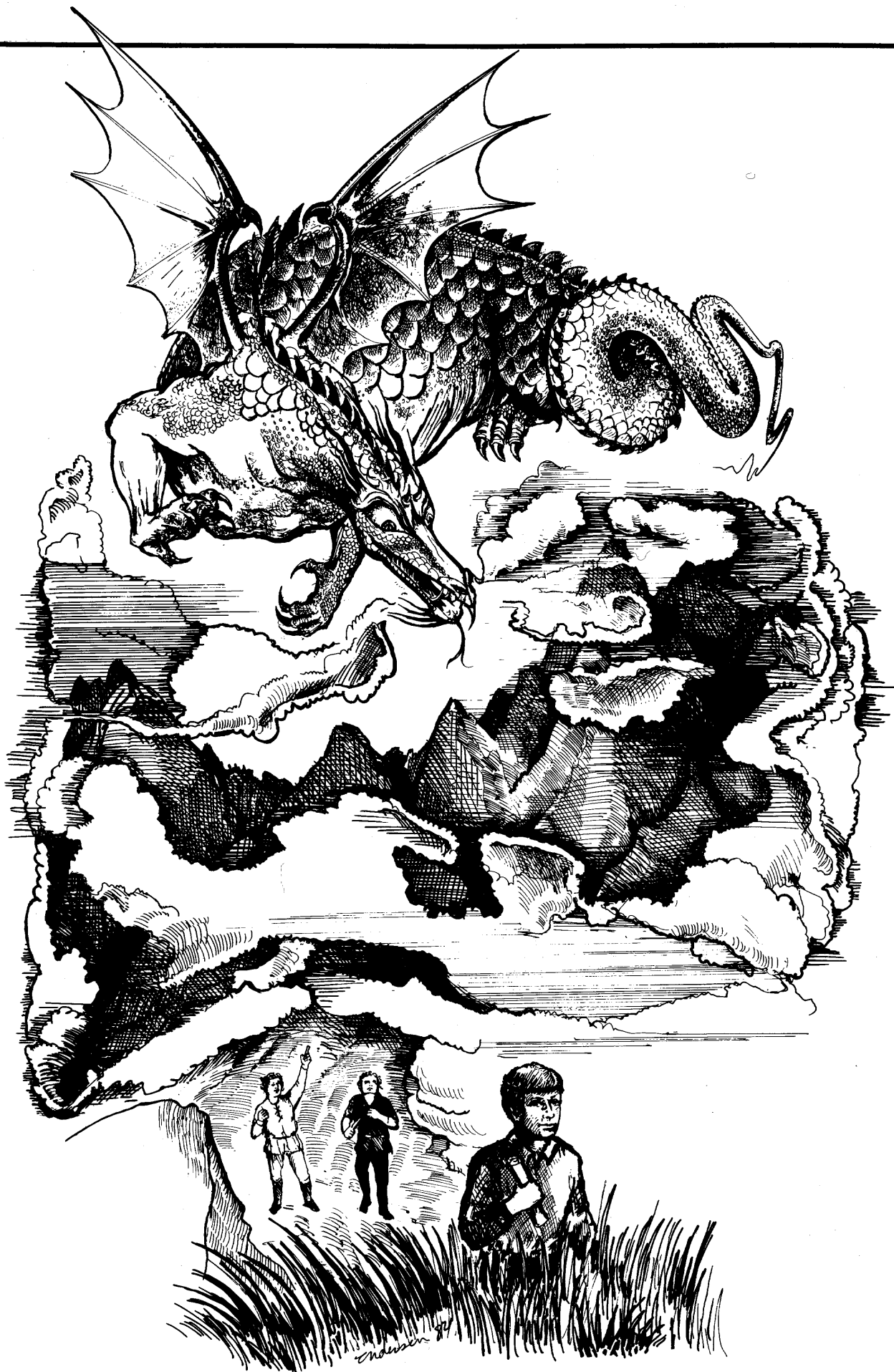
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WHEN WE CAME DOWN FROM THE hills of Lakar, the plains lay before us hot and green in the summer sun. The very air shimmered in the heat of the day, and the walls of the city of Taki'il flickered on the horizon like a mirage.

I turned back toward the cool blue of the hills, looked up, and saw the dragon wheeling in the sky. Far above us, so high that it looked no larger than a bird, it soared in the warm air, black against the light of day.

"Still it follows us," my comrade Pelirrin remarked, and I nodded in agreement.

"And still," Pelirrin added, "it does not attack."

"For that," said I, "we may be grateful." I had had my fill of watching the monster; I turned to face the plains again and saw that my brother Derenneth, the third and final member of our party, had moved on ahead into the tall grass.

I called him to wait, but he paid me no heed; so I ran to catch up with him. Pelirrin wasted no breath on calling, but hurried to join us. We dared not be parted from Derenneth: it was he who carried the crumbling parchment that bore the golden rune.

We had come down from Lakar to learn the secret of that symbol and to rid ourselves of the dragon's presence. The legends we had heard since our earliest childhood spoke of the wise men of the plains — the magicians who guarded the cities — and we were seeking a mage or seer who might explain to us the mystery that had befallen us and the meaning of that strange sign. Our own people have no patience for tricks or befuddlements, for the elliptical speeches of dubious soothsayers. We had no time to spare for the reading of books or for the learning of ancient tongues. Life is hard in Lakar, hard and fierce, and the men of the hills become themselves hard and fierce, with little taste for the decadent pleasures of the cities or for any wonder less direct than the edge of a fine blade.

That made it all the more curious that we had found the rune where we had, for we had been roaming the heights of the mountains beyond Lakar, where no child was ever born and cowards dare not venture. The winds are harsh and cold, even in the midst of summer, and the ground is broken stone.

I had seen sixteen winters; my brother, two more; and our friend Pelirrin fell between us in age. We were young and eager, and we set out to find adventure in the mountains. We dreamt of peaks scaled, of caves explored, of monsters slain, their hides brought back for our kin to marvel at. Derenneth boasted to Pelirrin's sisters of our planned exploits and basked in the warmth of their admiration.

When we had truly reached those mountains, though, we found that we had not planned as well as we had thought. The upper cliffs were too steep to scale without spikes and rope, both of which we had neglected to bring. We found no caves save for crevices too narrow to enter, but found hollows that led nowhere. There were neither monsters nor, for that matter, any of the ordinary beasts we had thought to hunt for food; and after three days, we had eaten all we had brought. Our clothes were not warm

The Rune and the Dragon

by Lawrence Watt-Evans

Illustrations by Phyllis Andersen

enough for comfort; it had been impossible to believe, sweltering in the sun on the hills around our village, that these slopes could be so cold as we had been warned, and we had brought nothing beyond our ordinary leathers and light hide jackets. We had neither furs nor heavy woolens to protect us from the night winds.

On the fourth day, the winds grew worse; and, hungry and thirsty and tired, we sought any shelter that could be found. Pelirrin went to look in one direction, and I in another, while Derenneth stayed where we had last camped, guarding our meager supplies.

It was Pelirrin who found the hut and called for us to join him.

We arrived, coming around a shoulder of bare rock, to find Pelirrin backing out of the open doorway as if in horror of what lay within.

We stopped where we were and looked at one another for guidance. Seeing no answers in my face, Derenneth called, "What is it?"

"A man," Pelirrin told us. "A man in the hut. I think he's dying."

Derenneth turned to me once again, and I to him, but for a moment neither of us knew what to say. Pelirrin ceased his retreat and stood staring at the door of the hut. I called, "Is it plague, then?"

Pelirrin shook his head. "I cannot say," he replied. "It is no sickness I have ever seen, if sickness it be."

"Let us chance it, then," Derenneth said. "Perhaps we can help him, and we do have need of shelter."

I nodded my agreement, and cautiously we advanced. My own heart throbbed like a drum in my chest; I cannot speak for my comrades, but I am sure they were as frightened as I was.

The inside of the hut was dark: hides covered the windows, and the door faced away from the sun. Still, as the three of us entered — first Derenneth, then myself, and then Pelirrin — we could see the shape that lay on a rough bed against the opposite wall.

It was an old man, perhaps as old as my own grandfather, and his right arm was thrust up, clutching a roll of parchment. He groaned softly and turned his head toward us at the sound of our approach.

There was no covering; he wore the remains of leather breeches and a fur-trimmed tunic, but both were blackened and crumbling. We could see that much of his flesh, too, was black.

"Is it plague?" Pelirrin asked, leaning over my shoulder.

"No," Derenneth replied. "See his clothing? He's been burned."

"Burned?" Pelirrin and I exclaimed.

"How could he be burned so badly, though?" Pelirrin asked. "And how could he have lived through such a burning?"

"How should I know?" replied Derenneth.

"Perhaps he fell into a campfire," I suggested.

"No campfire was e'er so hot," Derenneth replied.

"'Twas more likely a blacksmith's forge."

"There is no smithy in these mountains," I retorted, and we all fell silent for a moment.

The man on the bed moaned again and let his head sink

back, no longer watching us. Curiously, though, he still held his right forearm upright, still with the parchment firm in his hand.

"We might ask him," Pelirrin suggested.

I nodded, and Derenneth moved to the bedside.

"I give you greetings, sir," he said. "Is there any manner in which we might aid you? I fear we have nothing with us to soothe your burns — no balm or salve, not even bear-fat — but is there anything else we can do to ease you?"

I drew up behind Derenneth and peered over his shoulder. I saw then why Pelirrin had fled: the man's body was horrible to see, the flesh bubbled up in oozing burst blisters, and the skin blackened. I turned away, hoping that I would not disgrace myself before my brother by being ill.

The man did not seem to pay my brother's words any heed; instead, he said, in speech so slurred we could barely understand him, "'Ware the dragon."

"Your pardon, sir," Derenneth replied. "We do not understand. What dragon?"

Pelirrin suggested, "Perhaps he refers to old man Death as the dragon; it seems to me I've heard such usage."

"No, no," the old man said, rousing somewhat.

"'Twas not Death, but only a dragon that seared me. I found his treasure hoard, and I robbed it ere he woke and found me." He paused to catch his breath; his voice had sunk to a whisper after the first few words, and we all bent close so that we might hear.

"He caught me there and burned me, but I took the rune; he could not burn me again for fear of it. I escaped him and came here."

"Did not the beast pursue you?" Pelirrin asked. "I have heard that dragons are most persistent in recovering lost treasures and in slaying those that took them."

"So they are, boy, so they are," the man said in his fading whisper. "He waits outside."

We turned upon each other suddenly at that, looking at each other's eyes in fright and wonder. I turned away from the bed — and glad I was to look no more at the poor man's blackened body — and thrust my head out the door.

At first I did not see it, as from long habit I looked first ahead and to either side, but then I gazed upward and saw that great dark shape soaring overhead. It saw me as well and spat a tongue of yellow flame. I ducked back into the hut.

"The dragon is there," I said.

"How is it that we did not see this dragon as we approached?" Derenneth asked.

"Who looks to the skies when the wind is so strong?" I answered him. "The beast is high up in the air, higher than most birds dare. Yet it saw me and breathed fire; it must have the eyes of an eagle."

"And so it does," the old man said, having overheard my words.

"How, then, can we leave?" Pelirrin asked.

We looked at one another, but had no answer.

We stayed that afternoon in the hut and did what we could to make the old man comfortable, giving him the little water we had hoarded; he, in turn, allowed us to eat his small remaining stock of salt beef and cheese. I think

we knew from the first that our ministrations would be of no use, and it was scarce past sunset when he breathed his last breath. We had not had the heart to trouble him with our questions, and indeed, I do not think he knew much more than he had told us at the first.

We sat awake through the gathering of the darkness and into the night, not daring to sleep lest the dragon slay us where we lay. Midnight was approaching, and the old man's corpse was cold to the touch, when Pelirrin whispered, "Perhaps the dragon has gone."

Derenneth replied, "And perhaps it has not."

"Surely, it must sleep," Pelirrin persisted.

Derenneth shrugged. I said, "I have heard that dragons sleep for weeks or even months at a time, and then do not rest for a year thereafter."

"I think we should try," Pelirrin said.

Derenneth shook his head.

"Have you a better idea, then?" Pelirrin demanded.

"Or do you plan to starve here?"

"I don't intend to starve," Derenneth said. He held up the parchment that the old man had held, then unrolled it where the light of our lone lantern — the dead man's lantern, in truth — fell upon it. "We have the rune."

I had not given the parchment much thought, nor heeded greatly the man's words, but now I looked at the rune and marvelled.

It was all of gold as if gold leaf had been laid onto the paper, but it did not peel or chip as does gold leaf, though the sheet had been rolled and folded and wrinkled. The design was all of one piece, a single symbol incredibly intricate. A web of curving strokes led inward toward a central crossing, in an elaborate interweaving that reminded me of the seashell my great-grandmother brought with her from the Great-Water-called-Ocean. Looking at it made me dizzy as if I were in danger of falling into it, and it was immediately obvious that this was a magick of great power.

Pelirrin looked at it, then turned away. "We know nothing about it. We do not know how to use it."

"What of it?" Derenneth asked. "What do we need to know? This is plainly a strong magick; we need merely command it to slay the dragon, and we can be safely away."

Pelirrin snorted. "What do we know of magick? Only a wizard can use such charms without hazard. For all we know, this rune may summon a demon that will eat our souls."

"The old man used it against the dragon."

"Aye, and the beast still lives, does it not?"

"He was hurt and had no time to use the rune's full power."

"Derenneth, we know nothing about the rune!"

"We know what the old man said, that the dragon did not kill him for fear of it."

"Do we need this rune?" I asked. "Perhaps the dragon has gone; perhaps it cares nothing for us, but waits only for the old man. I think we should try to leave."

Pelirrin agreed with me; faced with us both, Derenneth gave in. That decided, Pelirrin and I crept to the doorway while Derenneth hung back.

"We should bury the old man," he said.

"We have no tools, and we know nothing of his tribe or faith," Pelirrin replied.

"Better we should leave him where he is, then," I said, "and tell whom we can of him so that others may decide what to do."

Derenneth made to object again, but saw that we were determined not to be swayed, and said nothing.

Pelirrin put his head out the door and looked up. "I see nothing but stars," he reported.

The cold wind blew around the doorframe, and I shivered as I, too, leaned out. A half-moon hung in the sky, and as I looked toward it, a black shape blotted out most of it.

"Look!" I exclaimed, pointing.

Pelirrin and my brother looked and saw the shape that rode down the moonlight toward us. Flame, so bright in the midnight darkness as to seem white, blossomed from its jaws, and it drew quickly closer.

I ducked back inside, and my companions did likewise. We crouched in the feeble glow of the lantern, looking at one another. Derenneth's jaw moved, but he said nothing.

Reluctantly, Pelirrin said, "Very well, then. The dragon is not asleep. We will try the rune."

"When?" I asked.

Derenneth said, "Why not now?"

I shook my head. "I think not. It is night, when the powers of darkness reign. Better by far to wait for daylight, when the sun's light keeps away many of the evil spirits."

Pelirrin agreed with me, and Derenneth, too, after some thought. That decided, we sat in the hut, pretending to sleep, with the winds howling outside, the cold digging into our flesh, a corpse keeping us company, and a dragon waiting without. Never had I spent a worse night.

At dawn we rose, abandoning our pretense, and gathered at the doorway.

"Now what?" Pelirrin asked.

Derenneth looked about until he found the dragon, circling far overhead; then he unrolled the rune and held it up above his head while, he proclaimed, "Spirits and powers, by this rune I command you: strike dead the dragon that flies above us!"

We waited, expecting we knew not what — a bellow of agony, perhaps, or a clap of thunder, or swirling clouds. There was nothing. My brother stood, clutching the parchment, while we knelt at his side and the dragon soared calmly, untroubled by any magical dooms.

We stayed thus for a long time, jammed together in the doorway. Then Pelirrin suggested, "Perhaps the dragon must see the rune, or the rune must face the dragon."

I nodded, and Derenneth agreed that that made sense.

"Then you must step outside and confront the dragon," Pelirrin said.

Derenneth admitted unwillingly that that seemed to be the case. He gathered himself together and strode out of the hut, putting on a bold face.

Immediately, the dragon broke off its gentle looping and dove toward him.

He held the parchment up with both hands, displayed before him. "Dragon, begone!" he cried. "I command you to vanish!"

The dragon did not vanish, but with an earth-shaking bellow, it veered to one side and turned away before it came within a hundred yards. We saw it clearly in the morning light: a great scaled beast that glittered green, with huge, batlike wings and short legs tipped with long, curving talons. Its tail whipped about like that of an angry cat as it turned aside. Smoke trailed from its muzzle, but it did not spew flame upon us.

We all took note of that at once, that the beast had not burned us to ash where we stood, and took heart from it. True, it had not vanished, yet we still lived. That was the greatest part of our concern.

"I have done it!" Derenneth cried. "I have driven it away!"

"No," Pelirrin said, "you have only turned it aside."

"You certainly have not destroyed it, as you sought to do," I agreed — though in truth, I was glad enough of Derenneth's result.

"Very well, then, I have turned it away; is that not enough to please you, O great one?" Derenneth was angered by our quibbling. "I am no scholar who knows the precise words that direct this rune's power most effectively."

"True," I said, "and I meant no harm. You have done well; let us flee, then, whilst the rune's power still holds."

On that we could all agree; we fled, making our way down the mountainside as quickly as we could, and turning our steps back toward our home village. We had had our fill of adventure and had with us, we knew, enough glory for any three youths such as we were. We had slain no monsters, yet we had found a treasure, and a great one, though we knew nothing of its nature or how it might best be used.

For the first hour we simply fled, moving as quickly as we dared across the stony slopes, without converse or complaint. Then for the second hour we bantered with one another, boasting of our courage in facing the dragon, and belittling one another with remembered or imagined acts of timidity on each other's parts.

The morning was half over when we paused for a rest, and for the first time we looked up at the sky in the direction whence we had come.

The dragon was there.

We had thought it far behind us, up on the mountain; it had not followed us openly, and we had lost sight of it when we first rounded a shoulder of the rock that shielded us from its gaze.

But we had underestimated its intelligence and determination. Now we saw it, circling, far, far above us, a misshapen black cross against the sky.

Our jesting ended, and again we fled silently, still downward, away from the mountains, toward our own familiar hills.

Whenever we paused and looked back at the sky, the dragon was there, circling above us like a hawk waiting its moment.

All that day we fled, and all that day the dragon followed. Yet it never attacked, never came down to earth, but hung always far up in the sky, watching and pursuing us.

That night we took shelter beneath a grove of stunted pines, still high in the mountains, but well below the worst

of the wind and cold. Sleep did not come easily; we all feared, though we did not speak of it, that the dragon was waiting until we slept to strike. We took turns standing watch, but even so, what could one youth do if the dragon should come roaring down from the night sky, belching flame and smoke?

No attack came. When I was awakened for my watch, relieving Pelirrin, I suggested that perhaps the dragon had itself gone to ground somewhere, to sleep.

Pelirrin did not reply in words, but pointed at the moons that hung in the sky to the east like the twin halves of a broken plate. I looked and saw the black shadow of the dragon glide silently across the higher of the two orbs.

I saw no need to speak, but took my post as Pelirrin, shuddering with cold and worry, wrapped himself in his coat and tried to sleep.

The next day passed much as had the day before, save that Derenneth, becoming emboldened by the dragon's continuing reluctance to approach us closely, took to holding the rune aloft and spouting incantations of his own devising, in hopes of chancing upon one that would drop the monster from the skies.

We alternately derided him and cheered him on as our own hopes dwindled or grew, but none of his spells had any discernible effect.

The second night passed much as had the first, save that the cold was less; and the third day began.

It was mid-morning of the third day, and the sun was warm and comforting in the eastern sky, when Pelirrin came to a dead stop. Derenneth, who had the lead, walked on unknowingly at first. I, who brought up the rear, halted at Pelirrin's side and called to my brother.

Derenneth turned and joined us as I asked, "What troubles you, Pelirrin? Why do you stop?"

"What troubles him? What else but the dragon?" Derenneth said. "The poor fellow has obviously broken beneath the strain."

I turned to reprimand my brother, but it was Pelirrin who spoke first.

"And are you so very bold, then, Derenneth, that you have no fear of the beast? Is your heart calm in your breast? Have you slept soundly these past three nights? Tell me that you have slept through the night, and I will call you a liar to your face, for I've seen you lying awake, watching the dragon above us." He paused, and Derenneth made as if to speak, but Pelirrin continued before the first word left my brother's lips.

"I have not broken beneath the strain any more than you or Elsen," he said. "Rather, I am thinking clearly for the first time since I found the old man in the hut. I know why the dragon follows us rather than slays us, and it is because of that knowledge that I have stopped here and will go no further toward our home."

"What are you saying?" I asked him.

"Have you not wondered what the dragon might want of us, if not our deaths?"

"It had not occurred to me," I replied, "that it might want anything else."

"Do you think, then, that Derenneth's babbling over that parchment has protected us?"

I hesitated, and Derenneth spoke up in his own part.

"Of course, the rune has protected us! If not the rune, then what? Why would the dragon spare us if it could slay us and destroy or take back the rune?"

"Why does it follow us, then? Why does it not let us go in peace if it knows it cannot slay us?"

"It seeks the rune, of course," Derenneth answered. "It seeks to regain the thing that has the power to destroy it."

"I thought at first that it was as you say, Derenneth, but another thought has come to me. What if it seeks, instead, to destroy not merely the three who took the rune but also all their people so that it will be troubled no more by adventuring youths or avenging kin? What if it seeks to follow us to our home so that it may destroy the entire village?"

Derenneth considered this, and after a moment of silent thought, began, "If we were to split up —"

"And what if you were right to begin with, Derenneth?" I asked. "What would become of the two who do not carry the rune?"

"Then what else would you suggest?" he demanded.

"We mustn't go home," Pelirrin said. "We must find some way of driving the dragon away so that it can no longer follow us."

"And how do we do that, O wise one?" Derenneth asked mockingly.

Pelirrin had no answer; it was I who said, "There are wise men and magicians on the plains, it is said. Surely, there must be a mage somewhere who can tell us what the rune is and how it may be used against the dragon."

Derenneth conceded the wisdom of my words, and Pelirrin could offer no better course of action; so, we set off in a new direction, turning our footsteps to the southeast, toward the open plains and away from our homes.

None of our people had ventured out of Lakar in many long years, and of the three of us, none had left the hills since early childhood. We knew very little of what we might find, or how far we must travel. Finding the way was the easiest part of it, for we needed only to head southeastward, across the ridge, taking our bearing from the sun.

So we went, then, and had it not been for the dragon, always hanging over us like an unpaid debt, the journey might have been pleasant indeed. Game was plentiful, as it had not been in the mountains, and we ate well on most nights. Runnels and rivulets supplied us with enough water, and on occasion we would come across streams large enough that they had to be forded rather than leapt. The sun was warm, the nights cool, and the trees provided shade and shelter. We crossed roads at times, following a few for some distance, but never meeting anyone. Perhaps people we might have encountered glimpsed the dragon from afar and avoided us.

The walking grew steadily easier, and the days warmer, as the mountains sank to hills and the hills in turn grew lower until at last, twelve days from the mountain hut, we came down from the final ridge into the broad green plain, where the trees no longer grew, but only the tall grasses. We glimpsed Taki'il in the distance, recognizing it from descriptions and Pelirrin's fading childhood memories; Derenneth turned his steps toward it, and we followed him, thinking that so great a city must surely have

within its walls many scholars and mages.

Taki'il was still indistinct in the distance, however, when Pelirrin pointed out a small house, built of yellow brick, to one side of our intended path. He suggested that we might ask the inhabitants whether they knew of a wizard or scholar who could help us.

Eager for the sight of another human face, Derenneth and I readily agreed, and we all headed for the house.

As we neared, we saw smoke rising from the chimney and thus knew the house to be occupied — a good sign. Then, when we were able to see it more clearly, we saw the charm painted upon each gable, as well as the talisman that hung above the door, and hurried toward the house, sure that we had happened upon the object of our search.

A woman sat by the doorway, leaning back comfortably, with a cat upon her knee and a stick of candy in her mouth; and we hailed her vigorously. She was older than we were, but still young, having seen perhaps thirty winters pass; and I know that I, at least, was sure that she could not be the mage we sought, being as young as she was, whatever signs there might be upon her house. Still, she would know where the person responsible for the charms might be found.

She opened her eyes when she heard our cries, and looked us over as we drew closer. She looked also at the sky behind us, and we knew that she had seen the dragon. I felt uneasy and waited to see if she would flee into the safety of her home, locking us out.

She showed no sign of alarm, however, but coaxed the cat from her lap onto the ground and arose, the stick of candy still in her mouth.

We ran into the clearing around the house and stood, panting, before her.

"I give you greetings," she said, taking the candy from her mouth. "What brings you hither, strangers?"

We glanced at one another, and Pelirrin stepped forward to act as spokesman. He made formal introductions and politely asked our hostess her name.

She said that she was called Harril, and made us welcome; then she repeated her query.

Pelirrin recited the tale, with Derenneth and I speaking whenever he seemed to hesitate, correcting his omissions or mistakes. The woman who called herself Harril listened to it all carefully, asking no questions, but waiting until we had finished.

Pelirrin described our journey down from the mountains, and his thoughts upon the third day, and our search for someone who might aid us; then he concluded by asking: "Know you, then, of someone who could explain to us what this rune might be and how we might use it to free ourselves of the dragon's pursuit?"

"Let me see the rune," Harril replied. "I have some experience in such matters."

My companions were as startled as I was to hear so young a woman thus proclaim herself a scholar, and it was only reluctantly that Derenneth produced the battered parchment and passed it to her.

She unrolled it and studied it for a moment.

"This is no rune of destruction," she said at last.

"Is it not?" Derenneth asked, startled.

"No."

"Then what is it?" Pelirrin asked. "Why has the dragon pursued us, if not to preserve its life?"

Harril passed the parchment back. "I cannot say. I know little of dragons. My studies have been in the workings of our own world, and dragons, it is said, come from another. Certainly, this rune you have brought is no rune I know, and such signs have been my special interest these past ten years. I can tell you, though, that it bears none of the foci of power that must be in any destructive rune. Rather, it seems more like a protection or a shaping."

Pelirrin stared at the parchment for a long moment, and Derenneth watched the plainswoman suspiciously; I could see that he doubted her words. He was obviously recalling the tales we had heard of the treacheries of the plainsmen and the ancient rivalries between our two peoples.

For my own part, I looked from one to another, and then at the dragon that still circled above us.

"If the rune is a protective spell," I said, "then that would explain why we have not been harmed."

"Yes," Pelirrin said. "But why, then, would the dragon have pursued us? Surely, it would know that the rune would protect us."

"Would it?" Derenneth said. "I think you credit the beast with more intelligence than it possesses."

"Do you think it stupid, then? It has followed us all this time without fail. Would not a mere beast have abandoned the chase before this?"

Derenneth had no answer to that.

"Harril," Pelirrin said, "need a protective rune be as complex as this one? I have heard tales of men drawing protective runes in the dust, and surely no one has so steady and quick a hand as would be needed to produce something like this so swiftly as the stories tell."

"The tales exaggerate," she replied. "But no, no protection need be so intricate as that. Furthermore, that rune that you carry has not protected you, for the spell it carries has not been awakened; I can see that much."

"Ah," Pelirrin said.

Derenneth and I stared at him.

"If the rune has not protected us," Derenneth said, "then what has? Why has the monster not devoured or scorched us?"

Pelirrin held up the parchment. "I think I see," he said. "The rune has in truth protected us — not with its magic, but by its fragility. The dragon has followed us because it wishes to recover its magic, and it has not dared to harm us lest the rune be damaged in the struggle. Think what a burst of the creature's breath could do to so ancient and dry a parchment!"

I needed but an instant to see that such an explanation would indeed account for the dragon's actions, but Derenneth was less easily convinced. He protested, "How could a monster know the use of the rune?"

"The dragon is no mere beast, Derenneth, can you not see that?"

Derenneth's face clouded with anger; before he could speak further, perhaps saying words that we might all come to regret, I interrupted.

"If the dragon has feared for the safety of the rune and

sought nothing but its return, then perhaps we need only to give it back the parchment to be free of pursuit, free to return home," I ventured.

Even as Pelirrin nodded agreement, Derenneth exclaimed, "Madness! If we give it the rune, it will destroy us, surely!"

"No," Pelirrin said, "why should it? It will have what it wanted. Why should it be so vindictive as to harm us? We have been guilty of a misunderstanding, no more; it was not we who robbed its hoard. I think returning the parchment will be amends enough. After all, Derenneth, would it not fear the rune's destruction fully as much once it holds the parchment as it does now, while we hold it?"

"We will have nothing to show for our adventure," Derenneth protested.

"We will have a tale to rival the best," Pelirrin replied.

"I say you have gone mad, Pelirrin."

"And I say we must give the beast the rune. How say you, then, Elsen? Yours is the deciding vote. Do you feel as you did when you set forth the idea, or have you seen the error of your judgment and changed your mind?"

I was not happy to be put in a position where I must choose between my brother and my friend, between two courses of little appeal; presented with such a situation, I could only select the course I thought the wiser.

"Give it the rune, Pelirrin."

Satisfied, Pelirrin took the rune and walked out onto the plain, away from the house.

"Pelirrin!" Derenneth shouted, and I leapt up behind him and grabbed my brother's arms.

"Stay there!" Pelirrin called back.

Derenneth struggled, but not strongly. I felt a brief urge to release him, to run after Pelirrin myself. After all, whatever the exact circumstances, was he not taking away the only thing that had protected us from the dragon? I looked up and saw the beast hanging in the sky, watching us intently.

As Pelirrin walked away from us, he held the rune displayed above his head, where the dragon might see it; and as we watched, the monster turned its attention away from Derenneth and myself, focusing solely on our comrade.

Pelirrin came at last to a small clearing in the grass, where he knelt and placed the rune upon a small rise in the ground. Then he arose, turned about, and walked calmly back toward us.

I fully realized then that we had forsaken our only defense, and Derenneth seemed have the same feeling as he went partially limp in my grasp. Then my hold on him slackened altogether as we beheld what unfolded before our eyes.

We watched — Harril as well as the three of us — and saw the dragon, green and shining, swoop down from the sky. It landed gracefully in the tall grass, reached forward with one taloned claw, and touched the rune with what I can only call reverence. It turned and looked at us from blazing golden eyes for a moment, then looked back at the rune, and then, to our utter astonishment, it spoke.

Its voice was deep and resonant, with a sound like the roaring of flames, but there could be no mistake that it was speech. It was speaking in a tongue that we had never before heard. What was more, it seemed to be chanting as

if speaking an incantation.

"It is waking the rune," the woman said.

Dereneth glanced at her.

"Pray, woman," he said, "that you have not lied to us about the rune's nature. If it does carry destruction, you will perish with us."

"I did not lie," she replied calmly.

Pelirrin paid no heed to the conversation; he was watching the dragon closely. "Look!" he called. "See what it does now!"

We turned and watched in bewilderment.

The dragon was forcing its way into the rune as if the parchment were not parchment, but an opening in the ground. It had thrust both its foreclaws into it, though we would have judged the rune smaller than either one alone; and now, as we watched, it slid forward with wings folded, tucked its smoking snout between its legs, and dove.

It was impossible to say whether the rune stretched to accommodate it, or whether the dragon shrank; the air wavered with the heat and with something more, and our vision seemed to be distorted as well. Still, impossible though it obviously was, the dragon forced itself down, into the rune, and out of our sight.

We watched in confoundment.

Pelirrin glanced at the witch. "You said that dragons were not of our world?"

She nodded. "So I have heard."

The dragon's body and wings were gone; all four of its legs, vanished; and as we watched, its tail slid down into the rune like a snake slides into a hole.

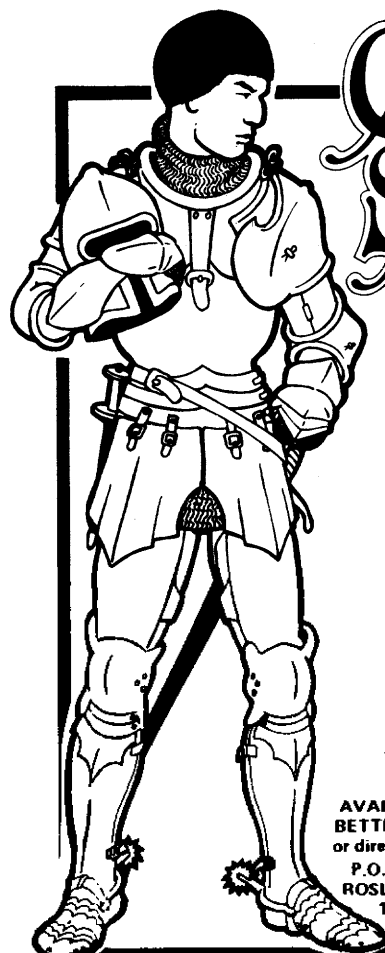
Then, abruptly, one of its foreclaws reappeared, rising up out of the rune; it reached out, gripped the edge of the parchment, and pulled it down over, and then into, itself. It shrank down out of sight and then vanished, leaving no trace of its existence.

"I don't understand," Dereneth said, as we all stared at the empty clearing. "Where did it go?"

"I am not sure," Pelirrin said, "but I could venture a guess. If it came from another world, as this woman says, then, surely, the reason it pursued us so relentlessly is obvious."

Pelirrin paused for a heartbeat and glanced toward the woman, who was smiling faintly as if she knew what he was going to say.

"We had taken its only way home."



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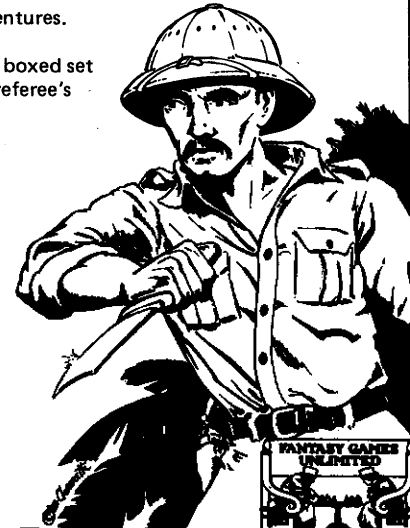
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The *SHOGUN* game: Such a deal!

If you can imagine five-card stud with a strong Oriental flavor, but without the betting, you have a good idea of what the SHOGUN™ card game is like. But that single statement doesn't tell you why the game is good.

SHOGUN is a good game because of how it differs from stud poker, not because of how it resembles that respectable old game. You can pick up the mechanics of SHOGUN more quickly if you know how to play five-card stud, but even if you don't, you can get the feel of the basic game in about 10 minutes. When you're ready to start, be prepared for a fast-paced game that's much more exciting and thought-provoking than the length of the rules would suggest.

The game is the first product to be released by Shipp's, Ltd. It's tied closely to the television mini-series of the same name (which was adapted from James Clavell's novel), with pictures of Richard Chamberlain and other characters from the TV series adorning the cards and the box cover. Everything comes packed in a slim, 1-inch-deep box with a black-and-red color scheme that will make it stand out on your game shelf even when it's surrounded by bigger boxes. Inside the box is a plastic tray containing a deck of 52 cards plus a stack of 24 half-sized cards (called "markers") that play a part in strategy during each hand. The rules brochure is brief, but really doesn't have to be any longer; the game is well described in a minimum of words, but with plenty of examples to help newcomers pick up the basics quickly.

Each player's goal in each hand is to compile a group of five "class cards" that are as well matched as possible — groups of the same card (a pair, three of a kind, etc.), or a set of all different cards from the same class (suit), either the Peasant class or the Samurai class. The better the matches, the more points you score, according to the values on the cards. The Peasant class cards range in value from the Servant (2 points) to the Shugo (6). Cards in the Samurai class range from the Wife (7 points) to the Dai-myō (15). The winner of the game is the first player to accumulate 500 points (or 1000, in the "epic game") over a series of hands.

SHOGUN can't be played two-handed, for reasons that will become obvious later. The upper limit of players is seven for the basic game and eight for the advanced game, because of the number of cards in the deck. A three-player game is possible, but won't usually be very exciting. A four-player game works well, because at this point at least half of the cards in the deck are used in each hand. Involving five or six players will produce a game with even more flavor, because more of the one-of-a-kind "divinity cards" (wild cards) and "action



cards" in the deck will come into play in each hand. These specialty cards are what make the SHOGUN game distinctive, and the elements that best capture the spirit of the game's theme.

The Shogun card is technically a class card, not a specialty card, but it has some special uses nonetheless. It has the highest point value of any card in the deck (20) and can be used in either kind of "class run" with four other cards of the same class. Using the Shogun to complete a Peasant class run can make a good hand out of an average one; having it in a Samurai class run makes an already good hand that much better.

The Buddha card is, as the rules say, "the only pure wild card" in the game. It can be used to represent any card desired — even the Shogun — in order to expand a group of like cards or complete a class run.

The Spy card, played just before the end of the hand, entitles the owning player to look at the single face-down card of any one opponent — enabling him to know the entire makeup of that player's hand.

The Buddha and the Spy are the only two specialty cards used in the basic game. Five others are shuffled into the deck for the advanced game, which is the only "advancement." No new rules or mechanics are added, except those that govern how to play the specialty cards. They include the Emperor and the Priest, two limited-use wild cards; the Hostage, which lets the owning player take one card from someone else's hand; the Heir, which scores points only when it's in the same hand as the Emperor; and the Ninja, which is played to "assassinate" another player's hand so that he scores zero.

The extra cards offer other things to think about, too, like "Bad Karma," which occurs when the Emperor and Priest end up in the same player's hand; that player scores zero,

disregarding the values of any other cards in his hand that would have scored.

To start the game, each player takes a set of three markers — one Favor, one Passive, and one Power Play. The dealer gives each player one card face down, and then starts dealing face up. Sounds like that respectable old game so far — but that's as far as the resemblance to stud poker goes. And "dealing" isn't quite the right word for what happens next. The rules call this the "Making-Of-The-Hand" phase, and it works like this: A player is presented with the top card from the deck, face up. He can accept it for his hand, or decline it and pass it to the player on his left. The second player can do the same — but the third player in line (and anyone thereafter) must accept a card "dealt" to him or else expend his one Favor for that hand to pass the unwanted card to the next player. When someone accepts a card, the deal continues with the next player in sequence. And so it goes until everyone's hand contains one face-down and four face-up cards.

Anyone who didn't use his Favor during the making of the hand gets one last chance to improve his hand by turning in any card in his hand and receiving a new one. Before and after this replacement phase, players who hold certain action cards must play them as called for. Then it's time for "Final Strategy," which is where the last two markers come in.

When you decide on a final strategy, you place either the "Passive" or the "Power Play" marker face down on top of your down card. When everyone's done, all the down cards and markers are revealed. Those who picked passive strategy simply score the points in their hands and get ready for the next deal. Anyone who tried a power play can score double for the hand if he's the only one with a power play strategy, or if he has the best hand of all power players.

If two or more people try a power play on the same hand, all of them except the holder of the high hand score zero for the hand. If two power players tie for best score, they both score zero and the double-point award goes to the hand of the next highest power player (if there is another one).

The power play rules have one more twist that doesn't seem to have a "Shogun connection," but is a nice catch-up mechanic. A player with a score of zero (no class run or matched card in his hand) can try a power play if he suspects that everyone else is using passive strategy. If he's the only power player, he scores 20 points for the hand (not nearly as high as a good hand, but better than nothing). But if anyone else also tries a power play — even another "zero power play" — then anyone who tried a zero power play loses 20 points.

It takes only a few minutes to play through one hand of SHOGUN, but in that time each player is compelled to make several decisions. Should you use your Favor to pass up that Peasant class card, in hopes of getting a Samurai class run? Should you save your Favor to get rid of your worthless down card? (The deck includes two "outcast cards," the Foreigner and the Beggar, which simply take up space in your hand. As the rules put it, "Both have no value and should be shunned if possible.") Should you content yourself with trying to build a group of Peasant class cards, hoping to double your score with a successful power play? Should you use your Spy to look at the down card of the player who has the Buddha card showing, to see what he plans to do with the wild card? Or should you spy on the player with four-fifths of a good hand showing, to see whether his fifth card completes a class run?

Because most of the cards in each player's hand are face up, you know quite a bit about what everyone else has. Just as in five-card stud, it's tempting to be optimistic and assume that the guy with the good-looking hand doesn't have a good down card — but if he does have all the elements of a high-scoring hand and he tries a power play on top of it, you may wish afterward that you had been more cautious.

When and how to use your Favor can be

a pivotal decision in every hand. In general, it's probably better to take what comes to you in the first two or three cards of the making-of-the-hand phase, and then use your Favor to help you keep your hand evolving in the right direction. If you can get through the "making" phase with a decent hand without having to use your Favor, then you can cash it in to replace a single card that doesn't fit well with the others. This can be a big tactical advantage — depending, of course, on the card you receive as a replacement.

In a game with only three or four players, you can take a lot of chances, because the odds are stacked against the appearance of any particular specialty card. If you play those odds and assume that the Spy (or the Ninja, or whatever) is not going to be a factor, the gamble will pay off more often than not. As the number of players increases, so do the chances that the specialty cards will show up in someone's hand, and a wise player will plan accordingly.

The game has its own customizing feature, in the form of a blank card that can be given a particular name or purpose and mixed into the deck for a little added uncertainty. You can use it (for instance) as a second Buddha card, to put more scoring punch into the game, or as a second Ninja card to achieve the opposite effect. Or you can think up an entirely new kind of card: How about a small-time Ninja that "assassinates" one card, chosen at random, from any opponent's hand?

The rules are understandable and, for the most part, logical. Descriptions of how to use the special cards take up almost half of the text, and all the possibilities seem to be accounted for. The playing procedure is simple enough to grasp immediately, and it's no trouble to scan the rules brochure for information on a special card when you need to know what to do with it.

The only rule that's hard to accept as written is a minor provision dealing with bad karma. If you get either the Priest or the Emperor as your down card and then receive the other card of the pair face up, you must reveal the down card and drop out of the hand immediately. It would add to the intrigue if you were able to keep

playing up to, but not including, the final strategy phase; after all, no one else knows you have a zero hand, and the other players might be forced to adjust their strategies if they don't know that you're not a threat. This approach seems to fit in conceptually with the idea that no player should know everything about an opponent's potential (or lack of it) until all the down cards are revealed at the end of the hand. The rules stipulate that you can't replace either the Priest or the Emperor if they both end up in your hand, and that seems to be okay; there's no way to offset the effect of bad karma if you're plagued with it. But that doesn't mean you should be denied the opportunity to finish out the hand and perhaps still have some effect on the game.

SHOGUN is a game with a combination of virtues. It's simple enough to learn in a matter of minutes, but the advanced game is complicated enough that no two games (or hands) will develop in the same way. Although each hand can be played out quickly, the game is long enough (especially the 1000-point epic game) to allow the breaks to even out: Maybe in the next hand, you'll get the Ninja and be able to get back at the guy who just assassinated your 66-point Samurai class run. The strategies involved are simple enough to be understood by a child, but the ins and outs of those strategies are delicate enough to intrigue and challenge the most experienced game-player.

The retail price of \$12.95 is a little steep, but by the same token it's clear that no reasonable expense was spared in the production of the cards and the packaging. The cards are stiff and durable, with a textured high-gloss surface that allows for instant identification while cutting down glare as much as possible. The plastic tray is sturdier than similar trays found in other games; all the components should last for years — which is how long it may take you to get tired of the game.

SHOGUN is available in many game and hobby stores, or it can be ordered direct from the manufacturer by sending \$12.95 plus \$2.00 for shipping charges to SHOGUN, Box 2279, Lincoln NE 68502.

— Reviewed by Paul Smith

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The butler didn't do it

Mysterious adventures in role-playing

Reviews by Ken Rolston

"The reason that mystery design is so difficult is because the GM must know exactly what has happened, where the clues are, what is currently happening in places where the characters are not located, and he should be able to make a fair guess as to what will happen in the future. As with a good mystery story, all of the details are connected to each other. . . . If one vital clue is missing, a scenario will collapse entirely and be no fun for anyone."

— from *Mercenaries, Spies, and Private Eyes*

Role-playing mystery adventures are very demanding on gamemasters. When using a prepared mystery scenario, a gamemaster must spend a lot of time studying the materials beforehand, familiarizing himself with the details and the chronological order of events. A mystery is essentially a puzzle, and the gamemaster must be sure he has given players all the pieces before asking them to come up with the solution.

Mystery role-playing scenarios depend little on action and violence — the central interest in most other types of scenarios. Much of a player character's time is spent searching for clues, questioning suspects, and trying to make sense out of the evidence. The gamemaster is constantly answering questions, and a single uninformed or inaccurate response from the GM can throw the players off the track and spoil the logic of the mystery.

A mystery role-playing adventure presents its designer with unique difficulties. A lot of detail must be prepared and presented in a form that's easy to read and reference. The background and setting must

be complete and concrete to create the right atmosphere and to permit the PCs enough freedom in selecting places to search for clues. The information must be organized for easy reading and for quick reference. Player handouts (ranging from documents to simulated murder weapons) should be provided or suggested where possible.

The three role-playing products reviewed below should be of interest to anyone who wants to create or run mystery scenarios. The first, the *Mercenaries, Spies, & Private Eyes* game, is a complete system with particularly good sections on creating and running role-playing mysteries. The second, *Death in Dunwich*, is a *Call of Cthulhu*TM game adventure with an intriguing mystery and a sophisticated sense of setting and atmosphere. The third, a *GANGBUSTERS*TM game module entitled *The Vanishing Investigator*, is a model of role-playing mystery presentation.

MERCENARIES, SPIES, & PRIVATE EYES: a contemporary role-playing adventure game for solitaire or group play

by Michael Stackpole

Published by Blade (Flying Buffalo, Inc.)

This 112-page softcover book presents mechanics, background material, and gamemaster notes for creating and running 20th-century role-playing adventures. Compared with more specialized RPG treatments of these genres — for example, the *Merc*TM (FGU's mercenary RPG), *James Bond 007* (Victory Games' spy RPG), and *Daredevils*TM (FGU's '30s adventure RPG) games — the mechanics are simple and the background material limited.



The mechanics are based on Flying Buffalo's *Tunnels and Trolls*TM game, one of the simplest of the major FRP systems. To make the game suitable for contemporary adventures, a complete skill system has been added, along with details for modern healing, martial arts, car crashes, and so forth. The T&T system is abstract, fast-paced, and of little interest to those who like close simulation of reality. There is little emphasis on tactical maneuver and subtle strategy in combat; the mechanics serve the dramatic purposes of violent action while permitting a rapid pace of play.

The background material in *MS&PE* is limited when compared with the *Merc*, *James Bond 007*, and *Daredevils* games. There are charts of numerous modern weapons, but other than the hardware of mayhem, little material is provided on the historical periods or the special backgrounds of mercenary, spy, or detective adventures. The book recommends literary examples of each genre as models for adventures, and a list of suggested readings is offered, but there is little help on specific institutions like the CIA and FBI. Economics is glossed over (a practical decision, given the time period addressed), and in general there is insufficient support for campaign-level role-playing.

On the positive side, *MS&PE* has several solid virtues. The eight-page chapter "The Art of Detection" is an excellent essay on running mystery adventures, full of common-sense advice and helpful tips. The chapter "Using Live Clues" explains how to devise and employ little props like match-

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books and snapshots of mocked-up murder scenes to stimulate the imaginations of the players. These two chapters are necessary reading for mystery FRP gamemasters. And the style of presentation of *MS&PE* is pleasant, light, and practical, as is typical of Flying Buffalo's Blade game aids.

Evaluation

Mercenaries, Spies, & Private Eyes is a very simple role-playing system which handles adventures in any of the genres listed in its title. The mechanics are conventional and unexceptional; their greatest virtue is their simplicity. If you are familiar and satisfied with *Tunnels and Trolls* game mechanics, this is the game for you. The background material for adventures in each of the three genres is very limited. The essays on designing and presenting role-playing mysteries are very useful. There are few supplements available; if you purchase the game, expect to design most of the adventures yourself.

MS&PE costs \$9.95; other similar RPGs (The *TOP SECRET*® and *Daredevils* games) may offer more background and detailed systems for your money. If, for example, you have a particular interest in James Bond, then you will prefer using the *James Bond 007* game system. If you are just looking for a simple system and are prepared to provide most of the design and background from your own interests in spy, mercenary, or mystery films and literature, *MS&PE* will be quite adequate.



DEATH IN DUNWICH

by Ed Wimble

Published by Theatre of the Mind Enterprises

This scenario was the first release in a line of adventures designed by Theatre of the Mind Enterprises for use with Chaosium's *Call of Cthulhu* game system, a popular horror role-playing game that seems most congenial for adventures with mystery elements. The fantastic elements (magic and high tech) of fantasy and science-fiction role-playing games don't fit

well with the traditionally realistic settings and style of literary and cinematographic mysteries. No other RPG set in the historical present or recent past (the *James Bond 007*, *MS&PE*, and *Daredevils* games, for example) has found as wide an audience as the *Call of Cthulhu* game has. *Cthulhu* also appears to appeal to a more literate audience than do most RPGs, an audience more interested in subtle puzzles and atmosphere than in combat and powerful magical/technological devices.

Theatre of the Mind Enterprises aims to please this more literate audience in its line of *Cthulhu* adventures. The diction and vocabulary make no allowances for sixth-grade reading levels, and the references to Goethe and Heraclitus mark the writer (and, by implication, the reader) as an educated and discerning adult. Don't worry, however; there are plenty of gruesome atrocities and violent conflicts to provide a stirring adventure.

The organization of the materials and necessary information is not as convenient as it might have been. Some player handouts are provided (though the information must be photocopied to avoid damaging the book); however, the player characters provided consist of bare statistics, with no role-playing notes. And the appendices that outline information obtainable through PC research should have been prepared so that the details were directly given to the players rather than designed in such a way that the gamemaster has to read the information aloud. No summary of the narrative is provided, and no chronology is listed, so it is difficult to get an orderly sense of the whole adventure. The gamemaster must pay close attention when reading the background information, and I often found it necessary to backtrack and scan ahead to make sense of what I was reading.

The gamemaster screen, printed on stiff paper and included in the center of the adventure, is a nice idea, but the players get to look at nothing more edifying than a reprint of the cover art, and the gamemaster gets only a couple of maps to look at. Finally, a whole page of text was accidentally omitted from the adventure, and was then placed in an envelope glued in the back of the book.

However, after all these critical things I've noted about the presentation, understand that this is an excellent adventure and an example of what good role-playing mystery should be. The theme is imaginative and engaging. The narrative is a sequence of well-developed episodes with many clues and false leads, with important informants who must be discovered and interrogated, and with a wealth of evidence — police reports, newspaper articles, and NPC testimonials — that must be sifted for significance by the players. The macabre elements are contrasted nicely against the mundane setting of a rural New England town, and the NPCs are colorful, plausible, and well-characterized, contributing effectively to the realism of the adventure. The designers also

offer practical tips to gamemasters on maintaining the proper tone and atmosphere when running the scenario.

Evaluation

Death in Dunwich costs \$8.00 and is a good value. Though the weaknesses in presentation in *Death in Dunwich* are unfortunate, they are understandable, given the particular problems of designing, organizing, and presenting role-playing mystery adventures. The mystery itself is detailed, challenging, and dramatic. The horror is satisfactorily evil and gruesome in the *Cthulhu* style, and the setting, background, and characters are effectively detailed. tively detailed.

THE VANISHING INVESTIGATOR

by Mark Acres

Published by TSR, Inc.

This adventure, designed for TSR's GANGBUSTERS™ game, is a model of effective presentation for role-playing mysteries. In the introduction to this column I listed the unique difficulties in presenting a role-playing mystery adventure. This module demonstrates an awareness of those particular problems and tackles them more effectively than any other RPG mystery I've ever seen.

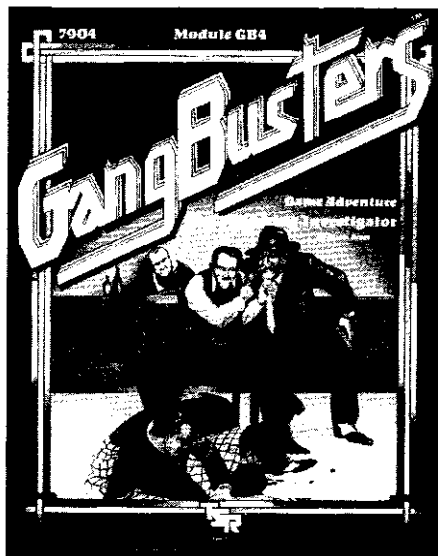
The problem of organizing the wealth of detail for the GM's easy reading and reference is addressed by beginning the module with a detailed, two-page chronology of the



important events and encounters in the adventure. For even greater ease of reference, this chronology is briefly summarized in less than a column in the gamemaster reference appendices. This chronology gives the GM the total picture of the mystery-adventure from the start and simplifies the inevitable backtracking reference problem. (For example, if the PCs want to track down and question the cabbie who carried a murder victim, the GM can scan the chronology to find the cabbie's name rather than search back through the whole module for the details.) The chronology focuses on the actions and movements of the main characters, so the GM has a sense of what is going on from the start.

The narrative episodes of the adventure are organized into three sections: action (essentially a chronological sequence of the most important action episodes), investigative (locations and informants who have important clues), and special encounters (a few optional action encounters that are not essential to the plot).

The action section is divided into a series of episodes, each headed with a reference of the time of the event and the map needed. The text achieves an effective balance between brevity and detail. The NPC stats are individually boxed with exquisite character illustrations — the best I've seen in any role-playing adventure, real characters with irregular features, revealing expressions, and distinctive attire that eloquently sug-



gests the personalities of the characters.

Inexperienced gamemasters may have some difficulty with the investigative section, which requires the GM to improvise the circumstances, settings, and dialogue of various informants. The notes explain what useful information the player may receive in each location, but the GM must make up the details of these encounters.

The characters are beautifully developed. In a separate reference section, each important character is given a psychological and dramatic profile, detailing motivations and distinctive personality quirks. In addition to

the aforementioned illustrations, the main text gives the GM specific instructions on the responses the NPCs will have to the player characters. Most importantly, the NPCs are perfectly suited to the gangster genre: tough thugs, loyal girlfriends, charismatic but ruthless gang bosses, cold-blooded executioners, streetwise good guys just on the wrong side of the law, clean-cut law enforcement agents, and seedy derelects. These characters firmly establish the atmosphere of gritty urban realism necessary for an effective gangster adventure.

In *The Vanishing Investigator*, the GM is in the know from the beginning. The module gives more background than is necessary for the narrative or for the solution of the mystery; this gives the GM ample support in case he is forced to improvise a response to an unanticipated player gambit. The designer helps the GM to stage the encounters effectively and offers suggestions on how to get the players back on track if they wander too far from the narrative. The characters, settings, and encounters are firmly rooted in the gangster genre; there are no cute anachronisms or annoying divergences in the tone of the adventure. The mystery is challenging: the clues are varied and obscure, the blind alleys are inviting and plausible, and the informants and criminals are self-interested and resistant to the prying and snooping of the player characters. The drama is effective: the victims are sympathetic and resourceful, the

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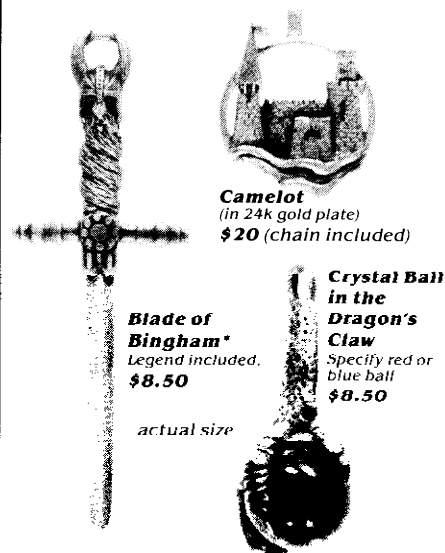
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thugs are professional killers, and the player characters must race to solve the mystery and rescue the victims before the thugs coldly dispatch them. *The Vanishing Investigator* is a first-class product, both as a model of RPG mystery design and as an effective and exciting adventure.

Evaluation

The Vanishing Investigator costs \$6.00. If you play gangster RPGs, buy this adventure. If you don't play gangster RPGs (and many do not), but if you are interested in mystery role-playing games or in the art of role-playing adventure design, either buy or borrow this scenario.

CAPSULE REVIEWS

DRAGONS OF DESPAIR (TSR, \$6.00): This AD&D® game module is the first in the *DRAGONLANCE™* series, adventures set in a coherent campaign setting with an emphasis on well-developed backgrounds, high fantasy themes, and well-motivated characterization. This module is a departure from conventional AD&D adventures. For example, clerics begin without spells — there are no cleric spells in this campaign world because the natives of the world have turned their backs on the true gods. Some campaign background is given in the form of the lyrics of a song and in a verse canticle. Greater emphasis is placed on atmo-

sphere and theme than is usually done, though most of the familiar elements of wilderness and dungeon modules are still evident. In some cases, the DM staging instructions are inadequate, at times the motivations for the PCs' travels through the narrative are unclear, and the comic relief only weakens the high fantasy theme, but the module is generally superior in plot, theme, atmosphere, characterization, and campaign background.

MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ Game (TSR, \$13.50): TSR's entry in the superhero RPG sweepstakes boasts of more than the considerable advantage of the Marvel license. The mechanics are original and simple, the tone is practical and informal, and the presentation is direct and entertaining. Rulespeak is avoided; for example, a round is defined as "one panel in a comic book" rather than as a specific period of time. Flexibility and common sense, rather than rules lawyering, is encouraged. A universal table (similar to the *James Bond 007* levels of success table), coupled with a simple battle effects table, makes for quick and easy resolution of many dicing situations with a single design concept. The moral tone is engagingly clean-cut and idealistic; heroes can get Karma points for visiting sick friends, dating, and meeting daily job responsibilities (a far cry from earning experience for butchering orcs). In role-playing, the emphasis is on style and

spirit. The narrators in the rule books — Spider-Man, the Hulk, Dr. Strange, and other Marvel favorites — provide personal models of the style of role-playing. The writing is lively and unencumbered by dry rulespeak. The character generation system is flexible and loosely defined; either the Marvel statistics are ordained, or the GM mediates in the player's informal development of a character from very general guidelines. The game is much simpler than the *Champions™*, *Villains and Vigilantes™*, and *Superworld™* games, and certainly a better choice for younger gamers. Confirmed supporters of these older systems will probably not be seduced by the clean rules design, having come to love the chains of their detailed and time-consuming character-generation systems.

THE MOUNTAIN ENVIRONMENT (Gamelords, Ltd.): For those searching for a way to introduce the Impersonal Forces of Nature as antagonists in their role-playing campaigns, this approved-for-use-with-*Traveller®* supplement by J. Andrew Keith is the ultimate in wilderness gaming. The 48-page book is a comprehensive treatment of role-playing adventure in mountainous terrain. The supplement describes in gaming terms the physical features of mountains (slopes, rock walls, overhangs, glaciers, snowfields, crevasses) as well as the mountaineering and wilderness skills necessary to cope with these challenges. The treatment is extremely detailed — perhaps, imposingly so — but the detail effectively communicates a real sense of the obstacles and hazards presented by mountainous terrain. For good planet-side *Traveller* wilderness adventures, this is a marvelous book. The basic system, or elements of the system, may be fairly easily adapted to wilderness adventures in other RPG systems, and this is well worth the effort for those dedicated to dramatizing the conflict of Man and Nature.

BREE AND THE BARROW DOWNS (Iron Crown Enterprises, \$6.00): The key to good campaign FRP is a coherent, dramatic cultural and geographic background. Iron Crown's *Middle Earth Role Playing™* supplements have taken the invaluable asset of Tolkien's detailed fantasy world and developed it further to provide excellent campaign supplements. The village and surrounding region is described in terms of history, agriculture, economics, politics, cultural institutions, and prominent personalities. *The Barrow Downs* is essentially a collection of tombs full of undead, traps, and treasure. The narrative element of the adventuring is not well developed, but the setting, characters, and culture are superior in detail, coherence, and plausibility. Statistics are given for the *Rolemaster™* and *Middle Earth Role Playing™* systems; adaptation to other systems is a bit of a chore, particularly where magic is concerned.

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the rate at which velocity changes with respect to time. Because this change of velocity is negative when an object hits the ground, we have a negative acceleration, or deceleration.

The reason a man falling into feathers fares better than one falling on concrete is that the feathers "give" a little, allowing the deceleration to occur over a longer time for the same change in velocity, assuming each man falls from the same height. The deceleration is less, and so is the force of impact.

Since damage is usually assessed on falls to hard surfaces, an assumption can be made which will allow us to find a suitable parameter for damage. Because neither the falling individual nor the Earth is very elastic, deceleration occurs over a very short period of time (small fraction of a second), which is largely independent of impact velocity. In other words, it is safe to assume that whether a body hits the ground at 10 feet a second or 200 feet a second makes little difference in terms of how long it takes that body to come to a complete stop.

The happy implication of this assumption is that only the change in velocity affects the force of impact, and the degree of damage must be proportional to that velocity change. Mr. Parker is correct in his assertion that damage is proportional to impact velocity, but for different reasons. Nevertheless, his system of saving throws seems a bit too complicated; why not reduce the figure of 20d6 as the maximum damage allowance for falling? This scaling-down would yield a new system that is playable, while retaining damage figures in keeping with falling distance at most heights.

Of course, the ultimate in realistic assessment of falling damage would have to take into account the fact that a falling person absorbs damage in unequal proportions to the forces involved, unlike

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falling objects which are inanimate. A falling branch absorbs twice as much damage if the impact velocity is doubled, but a falling human may suffer injury to a vital organ or system that he would not have suffered at the original impact velocity. The difference in assessed hit points upon doubling velocity might be a factor of 3 or 10, rather than 2. So my final impression is that, naive as it might be, the old system works fine. Since the number of factors that must be incorporated to make any new system totally realistic is unworkable, why not leave well enough alone?

David N. Moolten
Philadelphia, Pa.

* * *

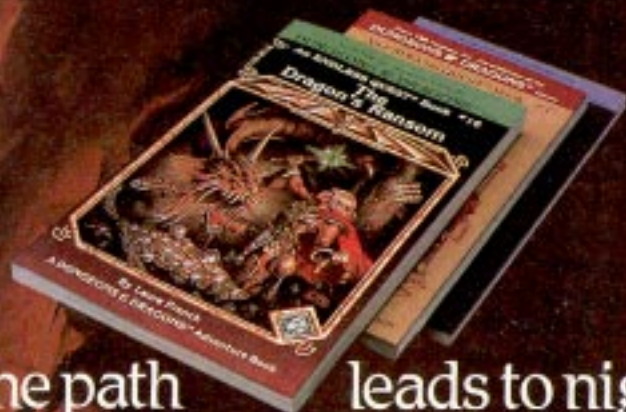
This is directed to Kevin Lawless in reference to his letter in #88 about my article in #86.

Kevin, it seems you missed one part of the AD&D rules. On page 105 of the DDG book, both Bahamut and Tiamat are listed as creatures that "should be treated as lesser gods."

Your argument that chaotic evil dragons cannot worship Tiamat, who is lawful evil, doesn't hold up when you look at other deities. Zeus is chaotic good, but worshiped by all good alignments. Bast is chaotic good, but worshiped by chaotics of all types.

The concept of "parishes" was created by both dragon deities as a method of keeping track of each other's power. "Parishes" were developed to force the cleric out once a year to see how the opposition is faring.

Alan Zumwalt
FPO San Francisco, Calif.



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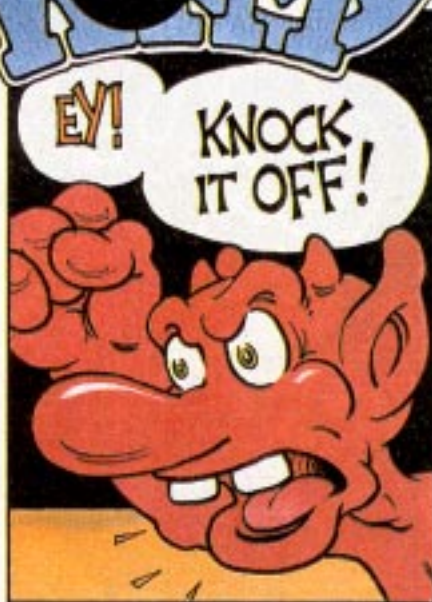


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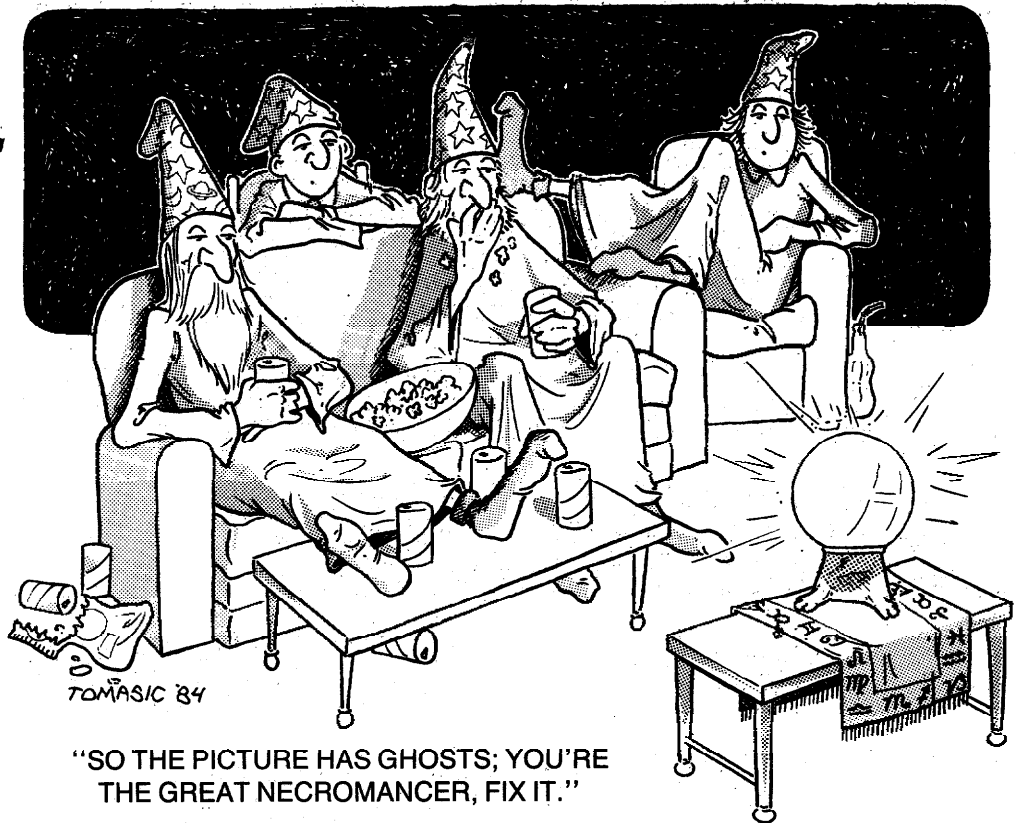




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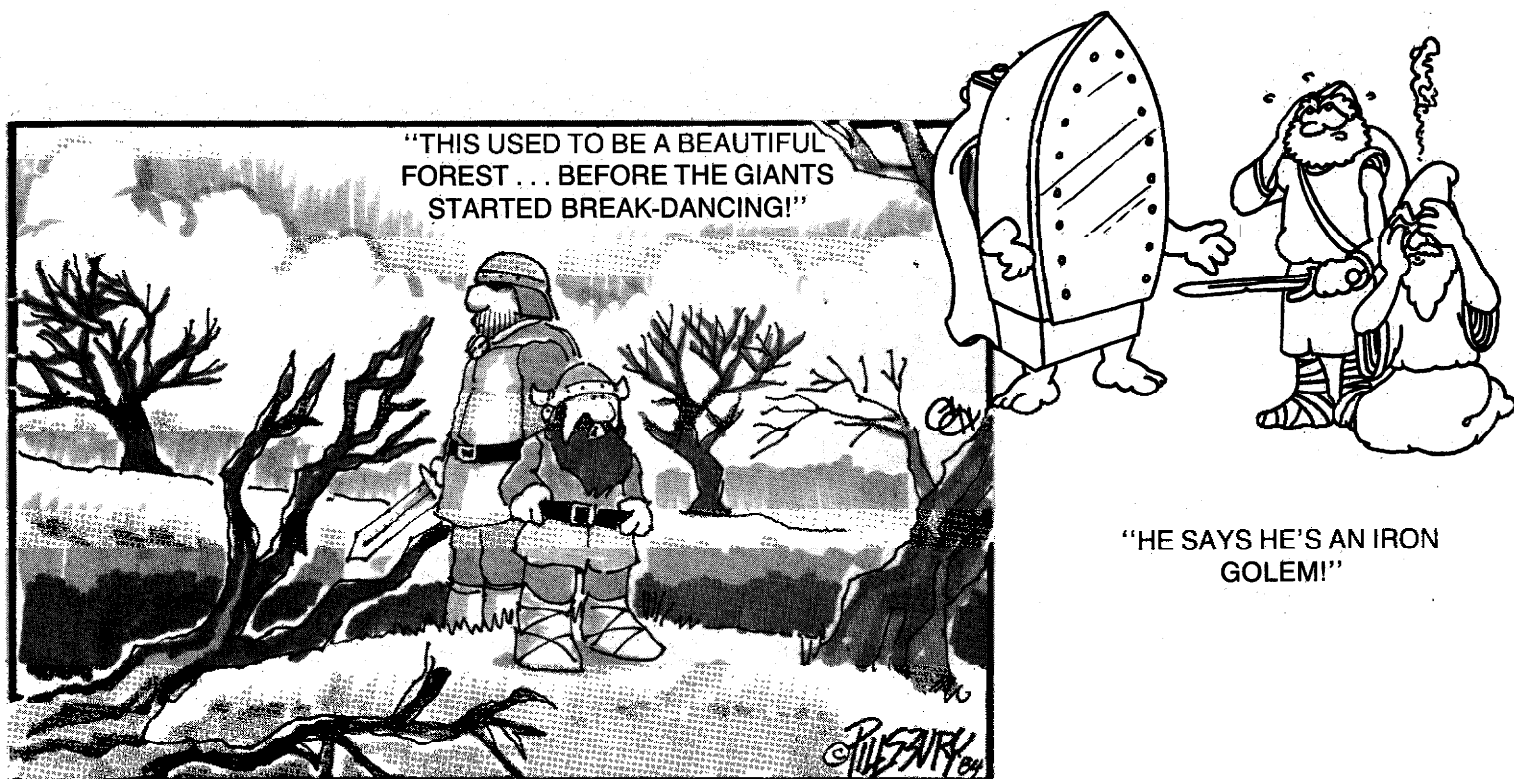




"SO THE PICTURE HAS GHOSTS; YOU'RE THE GREAT NECROMANCER, FIX IT."

She thought it true love she had found
When the handsome young centaur came around.
But one roll in the hay,
And he trotted away;
He was only horsing around.

— Joni Leigh Perry



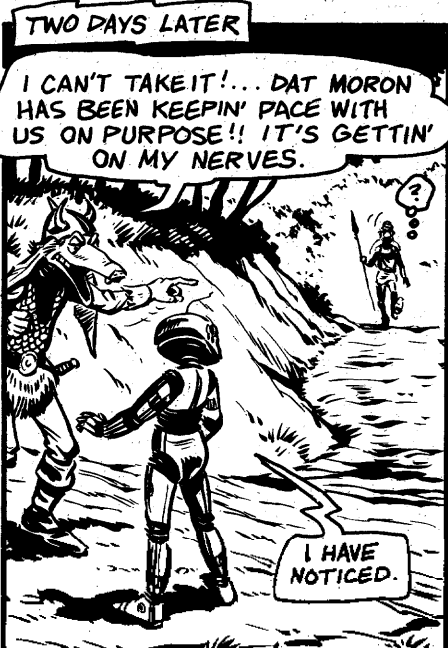
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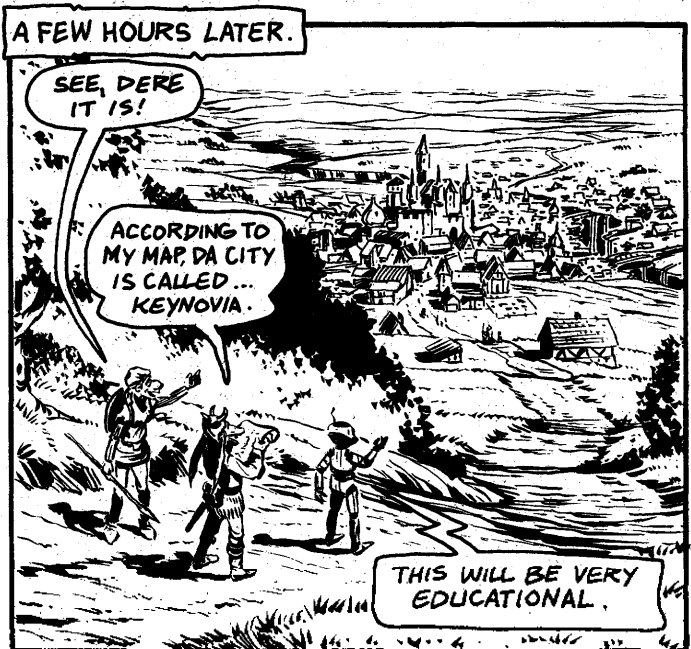
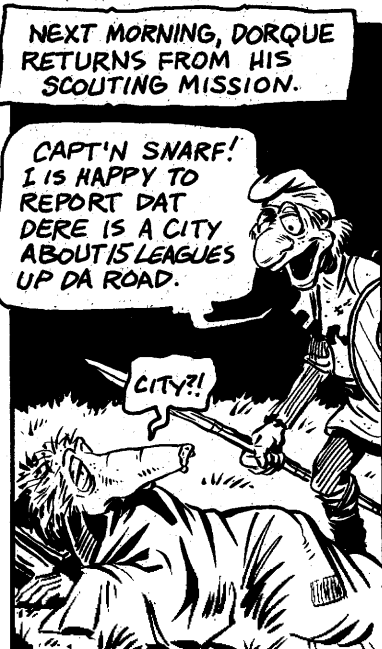
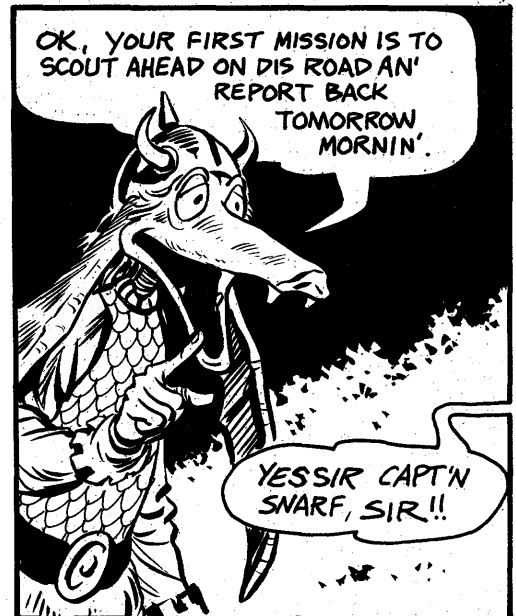
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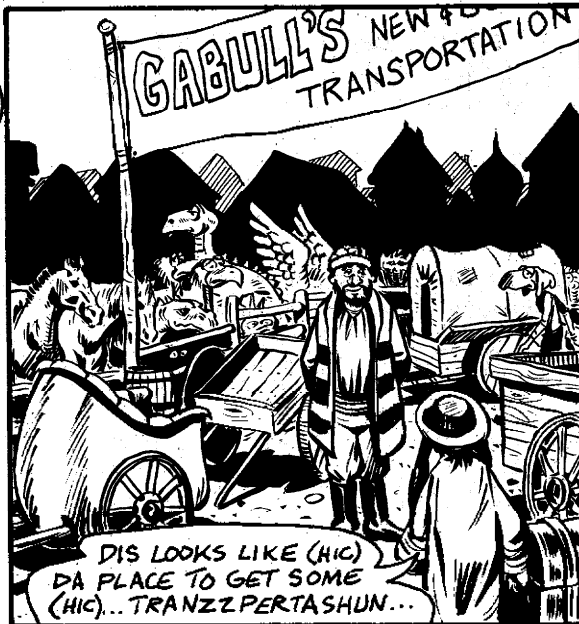
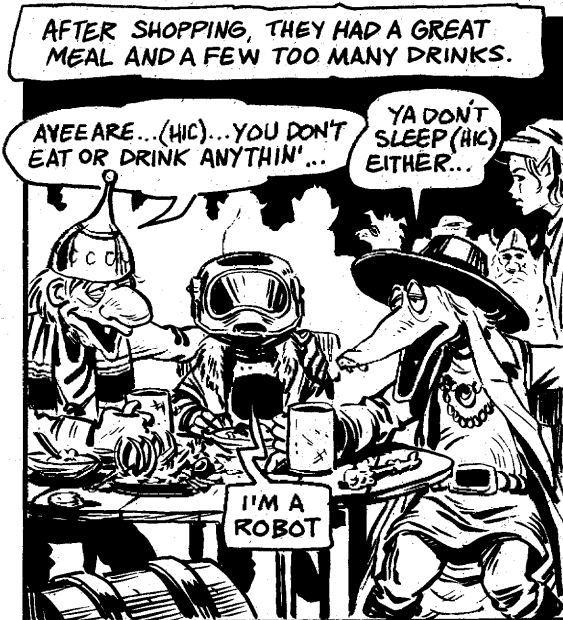
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